

伝説の勇者の伝説 2

宿命の二人三脚

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「なあフェリス。聞いていいか？」
「だめだ。いまだんごに忙しい」



扉がゆっくりと開くと、そこには一人の男が立っていた。
「なにものだ……？」
「私は、ミラン・フロワードと申します」







Prologue 1 No matter how much pain they bear

“It may be my last moments, so I really have to let you know.”

She said to the boy with a gentle voice.

But the boy couldn't say anything in response to this voice...

He didn't want to hear it.

He would be scared if he did.

He could only weep silently...

Just tremble silently...

She continued,

“I'm, very happy. Because of you...my life...became meaningful...”

That was a lie.

She couldn't possibly gain happiness.

Being forcefully separated from her beloved person, snatched away and dumped away randomly...

A dog that was humiliated as a vile lowlife.

Enduring the hatred that was harbored for a long time by everyone.

But even when she had to live a life where she had to protect a boy even if it meant reducing her own lifespan...

She definitely smiled...

She was ever so gentle in front of the boy, always smiling.

It's like there wasn't any sadness before, as she was always smiling.

Now, she, who had lived until her last moments... The boy's teary and blurry eyes watched his sick mother lying on the bed.

She smiled back at him...

That made him very unhappy.

He was unhappy that he couldn't become her pillar of support, that he could only let himself get protected by her weakly...

But she, even though she was so weak, hugged him gently.

"You don't have to be scared about anything, Sion. You've been groomed into a kind child, and that's really amazing. No matter how others slander you, those words don't matter. There will definitely be a lot of people who will love you... so even if I'm not around...you won't be alone, no matter how much you fear the death right in front of you..."

She continued to say such words.

She continued to repeat those words until the end.

No matter how much her body was in pain, no matter how terrified she was about being so close to death that was right in front of her...

She finally...

On the day his mother died.

A luxuriously-decorated box was sent over to the boy's house.

The boy opened the box, and inside it was dog's carcass that was stained in mud and a letter that was written with deliberately large font.

The woman must have felt lonely over having to go to that world alone, So we'll send something to accompany her.

Little one.

She was already despised by others.

Always being hated over and over again without interruption...

But at this point, he didn't have any feelings already.

The body emotionlessly held the letter in his hand.

He calmly cleaned the room, prepared the meal and arranged for the funeral...

He sat beside his mother again.

Watching that smiling face that wouldn't move...

"Mother said that I was kind...but, what kindness...mother, what is the kindness...you wished for."

The boy muttered to himself.

His tears had already dried.

Through the golden eyes that were giving off a strong will, he leapt past the bed and looked outside the window...

"I might not be able to do what you expect of me, mother. I don't think I'm kind at all...

However...

I want to change this country. If possible, I want to change this crazy world...

I don't know how many people I can save...

But I want to work hard.

To make this place...

Become a world that's like your resting place, mother..."

He stood up, turned the lights off and walked out...

"You've had it hard, mother. Please take...a good rest."

He closed the door.

He would never turn back.

Chapter 1 Escapees with no drive

Part 1

More than 10 soldiers started drawing magic arrays...

Creating large flashes of lightning.

The surroundings are filled with lightning that seem to be trying to intimidate the enemy...

On seeing this,

“Why must we be treated like this? I’m sleepy, and I’m tired here. Don’t you feel that something is definitely wrong somewhere here...?”

Ryner Lute muttered. Suddenly, a flash of lightning hit below Ryner’s feet, and the ground had a hole blown there...he glanced at the hole.

“Haa...always bullying me...”

Ryner sighed. He had disheveled black hair and an unmotivated expression even during this moment of crisis.

On the long skinny cat-back body, he was wearing a battle outfit formed by the white armor that only the strongest Roland Knights could wear and some accessories...but they still couldn’t prevent the sleepiness and laziness that came onto his entire body...

Ryner continued to say with that extremely relaxed voice of his.

“Or rather, I’m really not suited to bullying others. Un. That’s why I said that it’s best for everyone to take a nap together...”

At that moment.

An explosion!

Several parts of the ground below Ryner had holes blown into them...

“Uu...no way!? Can't I not run away? I hate having to run, you know? It’s

troublesome...you know?"

He continued to say those words, and the powerful lightning bolts that would definitely char and evaporate him if they hit him continued to be fired...like a thunderstorm.

It was a storm of destruction. A large amount of force came at Ryner's surroundings. To give an example as an explanation, it was as if the lightning came like pouring rain...and right now, he was in such an unusual scene.

However—

In this scene, he wasn't worried about the storm-like lightning as he continued to give his sleepy expression. Ryner's steps looked even weirder as he dragged his tired steps to dodge all the lightning attacks...

Also, there was someone else beside him...

It was a beautiful woman who didn't seem to notice the presence of the lightning as she continued to dodge them with natural feet.

The elegant blond hair continued to sway in the midst of the storm, and the long and narrow green eyes, the abnormally beautiful face and the stylish body had a leather-made light armor on, and there's a longsword tied to her waist as she showed such a posture.

It was really an unbelievably stunning beauty.

Anyone who sees her for the first time would definitely be captivated by her and let out a cry of amazement...

However—

Ryner just looked at this woman.

"You...hey..."

He wasn't in awe. He was sighing...

The owner of the beauty that didn't feel like an ordinary person's didn't seem to show any emotion in this situation for some reason...she continued to take out a package from her clutches without any emotion and opened it before eating the dango inside... And then.

“...As expected, the Wynnit’s shop dango are delicious.”

“THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO SAY SUCH THINGS, RIGHT!? ...WHAT ARE YOU THINKING OF NOW!? DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION NOW!? WE’LL BE KILLED, YOU KNOW!?”

“Fm, but even so, I see that you lack quite the tension there as well.”

“YOU DON’T HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY THAT ABOUT ME! Urk...haa...I’m tired. Never mind...I’ll go take a nap first. Please deal with all the troublesome things before I wake up.”

The soldiers of the border sentry were ready to use magic attacks on them...

Also, the sturdy large chair behind Ryner’s group cut off their retreat.

Both of them were completely forced into a dead end...

Finally, the soldiers surrounded the two of them...

A somewhat mustached man who looks like the squad leader walked forward,

“Haha! Finally caught you ‘taboo breakers’!! Let’s see where you’re going to run to? You can’t escape! I’ve worked here for 25 years. With this great border sentry Betran here, you’ll definitely be unable to pass this border!!”

He enthusiastically said such a line as if he was the boss around here,

But Ryner ignored the man’s words as he said to the beauty beside him,

“I say, Ferris. Ever since we entered the border and got attacked by these guys, I—~rrreeeeaaaaaaally have a question I really couldn’t figure out...can I ask?”

However—

Like usual, Ferris said in a flat tone that didn’t hold any emotions,

“No way, I’m fighting against the dangos now.”

“.....”

It was a direct answer.

It was an answer that felt like it was to be expected...

Ryner immediately felt faint and tried his best to control his breathing.

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT!? REALLY, WHAT’S WITH YOU! HOW MANY TIMES DID I TELL YOU TO CONSIDER THE CURRENT SITUATION! NOW’S NOT THE TIME TO FIGHT AGAINST DANGO!”

However,

Ferris stared at Ryner with icy cold eyes that didn’t show any emotion...

And said...

“So what?”

“Eh?.....Au, no...tha, that’s, I won’t be intimidated even with you saying something scary like so what!? Ugh, it’s not like that! So just answer my question!”

“So what?”

“No, anyway, I’ve always felt weird about this. We were decreed by that guy to leave the country.”

“Yes.”

“But why is it that we’re attacked once we crossed the border...and called ‘taboo breakers’ by others!? If that guy ordered it, the permit to leave the country should have been given, right?”

And Ferris,

“Yeah.”

Nodded in a bored manner.

On a side note, the meaning of this ‘Taboo Border’ would be those who learned Roland’s magic and were fleeing the country or sneaking out without the country’s permission. These people who’re ‘taboo breakers’ will be captured by the people sent from the country and punished severely.

This was a means to prevent Roland’s magic system from being leaked out of the country...

Of course, if they left with the permit of the country—moreso a decree by the king of Roland to leave the country, they should be able to exit the border without any problems...

That should be the case... Ryner looked around.

The soldiers were filled with killing intent, surrounding Ryner's group in an instant battle formation...

It was an imminent situation.

It was just this kind of atmosphere...

"Wh, Why did it end up like this?"

He asked, and Ferris continued to eat the dango calmly.

"Don't know."

"Well...saying don't know...you're...really irresponsible...you're the one who dragged me here while threatening me with a sword!"

"Un, that was the king's order. A sex maniac like you who likes mature ladies will do something foolish once I let you out, so my mission now is to 'watch you—and if you do anything to others, exterminate'."

"...Immediately eliminate... that king, I don't remember him saying something so overboard...speaking of which, why must I be the sex maniac here!?"

"Your face."

"Uwah...don't, don't just say it so directly...THAT'S NOT RIGHT!! ARRGGGH, REALLY, I'M GOING TO EXPLODE HERE!! HOW AM I GOING TO ENDURE GOING AROUND WITH THIS PERSON HERE!! ISN'T THIS TOO WEIRD!!? WHY MUST I LISTEN TO THE KING!!? TAKING AWAY MY REPORT WITHOUT PERMISSION, BECOMING KING WITHOUT ME EVEN KNOWING, AND GIVING ME AN EMOTIONLESS PERSON WITH SUCH A BAD PERSONALITY AS MY PARTNER!!? I'LL REALLY EXPLODE NOW!! I'M GOING BACK!! I WANT TO SLEEP!! IT'S DECIDED!!!"

And—

Ryner continued to roar as he walked towards the soldiers surrounding them.

Completely ignoring the mood of the scene...

The soldiers merely stared at them for a long while...and then,

"WAIT A SECOND!! YOU CAN'T JUST BRUSH ME OFF LIKE THAT BY DECIDING THINGS ON YOUR OWN!! I'LL DEFINITELY NOT ALLOW YOU TWO TO ESCAPE..."

Suddenly, Ferris,

“Alright, dango break’s over. Then,”

She said as she drew the sword at her waist.

And then—

“Ah...”

What happened next caused the soldiers to be stunned...

Ferris beautifully swung the sword in her hand and used the hilt to smack right at the back of Ryner’s head in a straight line...

GONK!!

“Ugya!?”

With a blunt sound, Ryner immediately fell...

“...”

And had no strength to stand up...

The soldiers backed away as they were faced with this sudden situation.

“Eh? Ha? No wait...what’s this...”

But Ferris turned around while completely ignoring them, and this time, she faced the large metal gate in front of her.

She nodded.

“Nn.”

Immediately,

Ferris’ body vanished.

No, it’s like she vanished, as she quickly jumped up.

And then, with the flash of the blade.

At the same time,

The giant gate was sliced completely in half...

“Oi oi, are you kidding me...”

Lying down on the ground, Ryner saw this scene and exclaimed without thinking,

As for the soldiers, all of them had their mouths wide open in shock...

This was really an unbelievable scene.

Her swordsmanship aside, her movement was so fast she couldn't be seen at all...

Also, that sturdy metal gate was sliced in half without resistance, like paper...

She's just like a monster.

They would definitely be slaughtered if they took action against such a monster...

"And has a bad personality...uu...do I really have to travel with this person..."

Suddenly, while he was saying this, Ferris landed on Ryner's back.

"Ugyah!?"

Now Ryner really couldn't get up...

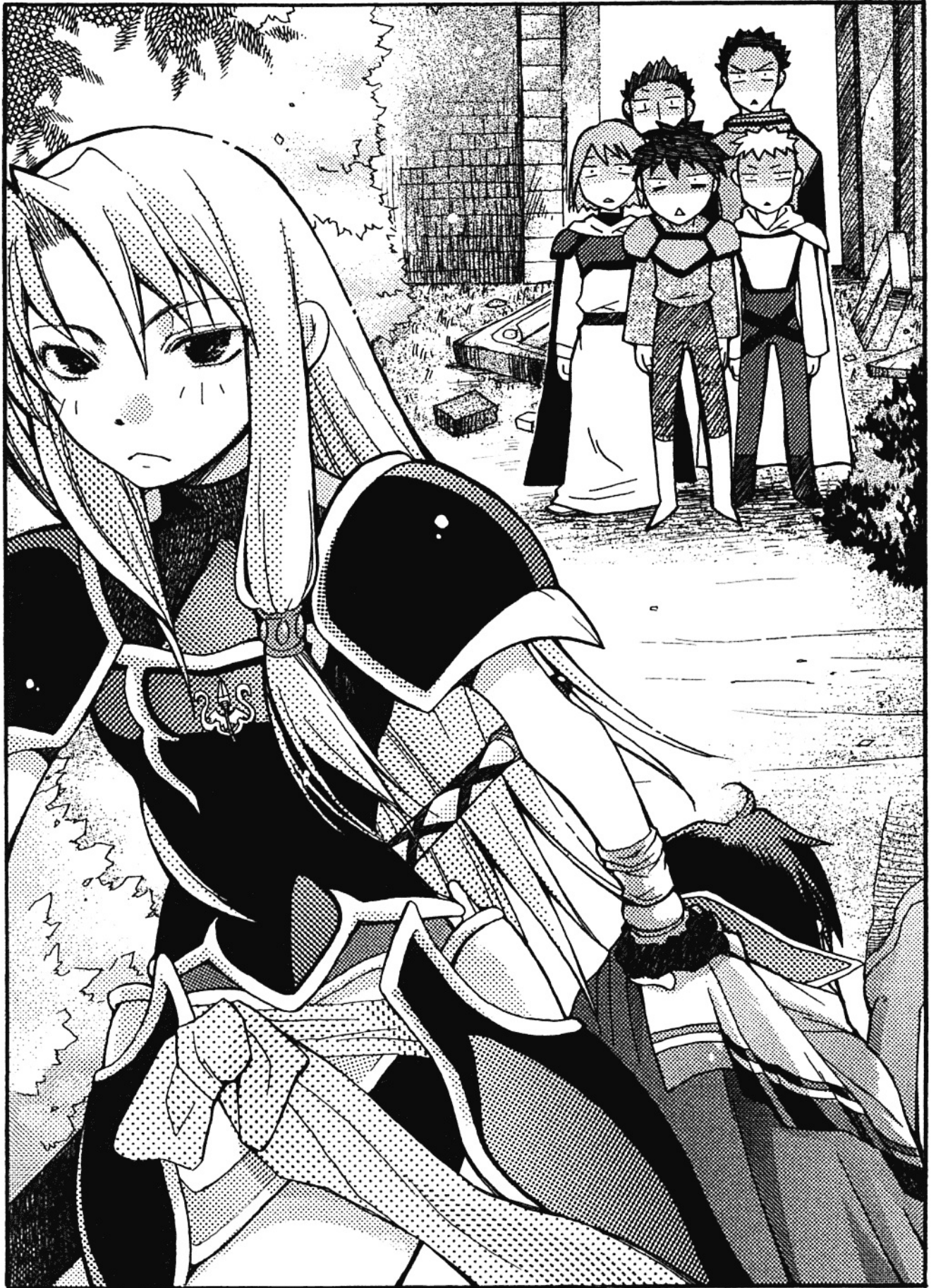
After checking things through, Ferris dragged Ryner by the collar.

"Alright, let's go, Ryner."

And then, she dragged him out of the gate.

Nobody who treasured their lives would stop her...

Nobody did...



Part 2

And now for a slight change in location and time...

Ryner's group entered the neighboring country of the Roland Empire, the Nelpha Imperial.

On the road that extended far out, Ryner continued to walk, *boto boto*, and gave an expression that showed that he had given up.

"Haa...I got it... I would hate to be killed by you, so I'll just obey you for the time being...what's next? Is our aim really to find all the relics of the legends scattered all over the world in the report I wrote? Do you actually believe they exist?"

Ferris, who was walking beside him, nodded,

"It doesn't matter whether I believe or not. I just don't want that cruel king to use a hostage and force me to obey orders."

"Hostage...?Ahh, speaking of which, the king did seem to mention it before when we left the palace...or rather, your little sister got taken by the king as a hostage, right?"

But Ferris shook her head,

"My sister's life doesn't matter. She's my sister, and she will always have a way to survive on her own. More than that, if I don't listen, that king will destroy the Wynnit dango shop...if I can't eat the dango from that shop, what should I eat to live on?"

"..."

There was nothing to think about...

Ryner frowned, but he didn't know what would happen to him if he argued back, so he nodded.

“That guy’s really too much, forcing a partner with such bad character onto me...the country’s doomed with that kind of guy as king...”

“Un, just like you say, a king who is despicable and also the friend of a sex maniac...I really don’t dare to imagine the fate of this country...”

““ ... ””

Both of them went silent, and then—

“I say... was the sex maniac referring to me?”

“You’re the only bastard here. Is that partner with bad personality referring to me?”

And Ryner and Ferris glared at each other...

Several seconds later.

Again, Ryner looked rather frail as he dragged his battered body and moved forward.

“...An, anyway, about that, we have to find the powerful relics of the legends scattered all over various countries..”

“Nn, that’s right. We can’t possibly let the powerful relics fall into the hands of other countries.”

“Or rather, I feel that nobody actually went to find something like legendary relics so seriously, so there shouldn’t be any problems...”

Ferris showed a surprised look.

“Un? Really? But I heard from the king that the report you wrote about the relics was really outstanding?”

Ryner gave a wry smile.

“...An outstanding report...huh...even though I wrote it...ah, never mind. Given that we crossed the border so brazenly like that, I guess we can’t go back before things can even settle...let’s go find out about the legend of Nelpha...really...why did it become so troublesome...then, let’s go to the capital of Nelpha.”

“Nn, are there any legendary relics over there?”

“No...there aren't any...in fact, the report I wrote only contained the information collected in Roland, so for the legends in the Nelpha Imperial, I have to check them in Nelpha. If not, I can't find the correct place...”

“Hou, so we're going to the capital?”

“Un, to the Imperial Library.”

“Let's go then.”

As she said that, Ferris started to walk off...

Ryner couldn't help but grumble.

“I say, can't you go a little slower? I was beaten up pretty badly by you. Don't you have any sympathy for your wounded teammate...I'm sleepy, tired, and when on a trip, I really hate the 'let's work hard and walk to the next city today!' situation, you know? But...”

However, the moment Ryner said this, Ferris turned around and put her hand at the hilt of the sword on her waist—

Ryner panicked the moment he saw that,

“Okay! okay! I got it. I'll walk, I'll walk...”

He started to walk as he said,

“Damn it. Really, you're the devil! Speaking of which...you just sliced that large gate in half...what kind of person are you!?”

But Ferris ignored this.

“I don't want to hear that from you when you can keep dodging fatal blows from my sword all the time...I'm the one who wants to ask you who in the world you are.”

“Ugh...did you see through such a thing?”

“Of course. But I'll definitely kill you next time...”

“DON'T KILL ME!!”

Both of them continued with their dangerous conversation as they walked

down the road and went away.

They're aiming for the capital of Nelpha Imperial...

Part 3

And now for a shift in location back to the Roland Empire.

This was the largest building in the country, full of unnecessary authority.

The city where the Roland King's lived.

In that city, in that room that was most simple...

The king of this city was there.

The elegant looking silver hair, the golden eyes that showed a strong will, and a nice face.

Sion Astal.

Whether he was the son of an ex-king's concubine, whether it was the accomplishments during the war against the Kingdom of Estabul and how he leapt into the higher command of the Roland army...

He then called out the king of Roland on his tyranny, used a splendid move to launch a revolution and became the hero king.

The king who was merely 19 years old used the exceptional charisma, ability, looks that came with his blood as a leader and got the majority of the people's support...

However, with the people who supported him, it meant that he would be hated by the politicians— the nobles...

“U~n”

Sion narrowed his golden eyes, staring at the documents in front of him and pondering.

“If I don't deal with the flooding in this river, the surrounding cities will be affected...in that case, I can only delay the development of the Beril area...but if that's the case, Beril will not remain silent...un~”

At this moment, from beside him,

“Well...Astal-sama.”

A voice was suddenly heard, but Sion didn't lift his head.

“Un? Wait a moment, Fiole. I'll deal with this first...done.”

He then turned around.

“What is it? Is there something?”

The 16, 17-year-old youth who was slightly younger than Sion was standing in front of him and smiling.

But Fiole still showed a slightly angry expression.



“It’s not about what happened, Astal-sama! How many hours have you been continuously working!?”

“Eh?”

Sion pondered for a while,

“Uu, how much time was it?”

Fiole snatched the document in Sion’s hands away.

“You’ve been sitting in that seat for 20 hours, and didn’t you just arrive from the inspection of the land...you haven’t had a proper meal yet...your body will be in bad shape if this keeps up! Here! I won’t hand these documents over to you until you finish this food.”

He pointed at the luxurious food on the cart as he said that.

Sion saw it, and gave a bothered smile.

“You’re really scary, Fiole. I got it. I’ll rest for a while then.”

Sion raised his hands to surrender, and Fiole gave a ‘that should be the case’ look before starting to clear the documents on the on the table, and then laid the food over.

Sion looked at these dishes, and then folded his arms,

“Actually, Fiole, what about the situation there? The leaders in Cleado village not collecting taxes due to their feud with the nobles.”

As he finished his words, Fiole finished laying all the dishes onto the table.

“Work~ again...about that, I went to the place to sort the leaders’ views and compiled them into documents. However, I won’t show them to you until you finish your meal!”

“I, I got it. But, you finished arranging the documents...and the problem just happened...I suppose it was the right choice to nominate you. You’re outstanding.”

“Wh...why are you saying such things? I won’t give you any leeway even if you praise me, you know?”

Fiole's face was blushing red...

However, Sion was serious,

"No, I'm being serious here. You helped me out a lot here. Now that I think about it, Fiole. You managed to compile the report in such a short time. You're the one who didn't sleep well at all, weren't you?"

Fiole shook his head.

"I'm fine here. I was raised in a poor family. My parents died in the war started by the ex-king...and you picked me up when I was wandering with my sister...so serving you is something I have to do. But..."

Fiole showed a hardworking look with that somewhat childish face on him.

"I can't consider myself to be repaying you if you're working much harder than me."

Sion smiled.

"Repay? So that's what you're thinking about, Fiole. Un~ that's troublesome. This is a whole lot different from my ideals...beside, I never did anything worth making you repay me. Even though anyone can tell that you're outstanding, the insistent nobles demanded that people of low background couldn't be raised in rank, and I couldn't nominate you officially and hid it from the nobles..."

But Fiole shook his head,

"What are you saying? That's enough for me. It's like a dream for me to live this life. It's because of you that my sister can go to school properly, Astal-sama...to a commoner like me, there's no better thing..."

Suddenly,

"That's not it."

Sion suddenly raised his voice to interrupt Fiole's words.

Fiole was shocked,

"Eh...?"

Sion stared at Fiole's troubled eyes—

And then, he smiled again.

“Don’t think of it this way, Fiole. The background doesn’t matter. The birth circumstances don’t matter. Right now, there are nobles in this country, and there exist a noble...but do I look like I’m of a higher status than you? Do you feel that way when looking at other nobles? No, right? Everyone’s the same.

The people...should all be equal.

Of course, everyone needs to act a certain role...but one day, I will create that kind of country.

A country where everyone is equal; one without wars...

To achieve that, there will be a lot of obstacles. The old corrupted system, the antagonistic mentality towards me who rose in ranking in such a short time, the nobles who are only interested in saving themselves and money...

I want to change all of this...

"It will take a lot of time, so I need outstanding talents like you. But this isn’t the most important thing..."

As he said this, Sion closed his eyes. Immediately, a lot of images appeared in his mind. The dog carcasses sent over, the mouths of the nobles who insulted him for being a lowborn, a dirty dog’s kid.

The despicable identity...

Of the mother who had the most noble look in the world...

Sion smiled—

“The most important thing is not to give up, Fiole. That’s what I feel. Don’t just give up because of your commoner status...don’t give up because of this. No matter how many people look down on you...you’re definitely not alone. You’ll definitely have a lot of allies...

"However, these are just something I heard other people make up..."

He shrugged his shoulders.

“ ...”

Fiole went silent, merely widening his eyes to look at Sion...

“What is it, Fiole? Did I say something weird?”

Fiole hurriedly shook his head.

“No! That’s not it! It’s just that...”

“Fm, what then?”

Fiole smiled radiantly.

“It’s just that...it’s really great that you’re the leader of this country. That’s what I think.”

“Eh?”

Sion widened his eyes.

“You won’t get any leeway by praising me, you know?”

Fiole shook his head.

“I’m serious. I’m proud that you’re the king of this country. And I’m feeling blessed over my sister who’s being cared by the country like this...I really thank god for that.”

Sion scratched his head in an awkward manner...

“You flatter me.”

Fiole grinned and said.

“That’s right. You’re the king of this country~ it’s not bad to have such chess pieces, right?”

“Ah—I see. So you’re really a good strategist. Very outstanding.”

“Alright, don’t just say such things. Hurry up and eat. The nobles’ dinner will start soon, and at such a place...”

Sion’s face suddenly became stern.

“Ahh, I definitely can’t have a good meal with those foolish fake nobles. Really, can’t they do anything on their own about such meals? Wasting the funds of the people...only knowing how to harm others and recommending their daughters to be my wife or something. It’s because of them that I’m surrounded by such ambitious women and lost all my appetite.”

“Hahaha, but there’re a lot of people who actually admire you there, Astal-sama? I’m the same as well. It’s not because you’re the king, but I want to let my sister marry you, Astal-sama.”

“Fm~, is that so...but your sister should be a good kid, Fiole...how old is your sister?”

“Younger than me by 3 years...she’s 14.”

“What is she doing now?”

Fiole’s expression softened.

“Because of you, she’s now studying in school. Unlike me, she’s outstanding, has good grades and is really energetic. She would occasionally write to me... but I don’t even have time because my superior here’s busy, so I couldn’t write back...ahh, she must be feeling lonely?”

“...I say...you’re...secretly deliberately trying to provoke me into resting, right?”

Fiole shook his head.

“No, I’m not doing it secretly. I’m directly provoking you.”

And then, he showed a worried look.

“You really need to...take care of yourself. Or else you’re going to harm your body.”

That expression looked like he would cry anytime soon. Sion frowned,

“Un~ I got it. Then, after the dinner event tonight, I’ll go back to my room for some long-needed rest...as exchange, you will go for vacation this weekend, Fiole.”

“Eh? ...Vacation? No, I can’t accept this. I really don’t have the time for this...”

“Un~ really, you. Forcing me to go sleep, yet you don’t want to sleep? I won’t be able to sleep then.”

“Wh, why are you saying such childish things...besides, even if I don’t rest...”

But Sion interrupted Fiole.

“I’m not letting you rest for your sake, but for your sister's. Go find her.”

“Ah...”

Fiole went silent...

And then,

“I understand. I’ll gladly accept this then.”

He smiled happily.

Part 4

The ex-king built this hall for entertainment purposes, and created this place as a fan-shaped room with the king's throne as the base. This construct, called the Azure Illusion room, had all sorts of glamorous decorations on all places imaginable, even the walls and ceiling. This large hall had thousands of people in glamorous clothing, men and women—all who were called nobility, were laughing and talking here.

The luxurious food; the meaningless expensive wine...

Sion saw all of this...

And sighed.

How much money was needed to host a banquet of this scale...?

Fiole once calculated it before, and the total amount wasn't just at a level where he could just sigh at it, but one that was bothersome...they could have used the money in other places to save a lot of people ...

But as the king, Sion couldn't stop such a banquet that used up so much money.

The power of the nobles was very high.

Sion frowned as he folded his arms. He had already dealt with the former king who had relations with these nobles, but...

Nothing changed...

No, rather than that...

As he dealt with the former king, something big was created, inadvertently born...

At this moment, the several armor-clad men surrounding Sion like guards saw him grimace. One of them, a 20-year-old man who had tidy bright red hair,

sharp red eyes and a straight back said, “Don’t show such a tense look, okay? Look, the pretty girls are staring at you. Go over there, go on. Isn’t it an important job for a king to interact with the nobles?”

Sion stared at him with a disgusted look.

“You’re saying that because you want to talk to the girls, Claugh.”

“Ah, I was seen through...”

“What about being seen through...weren’t you also like that when you were in my army?”

“Ara, was it like that?”

This time, the man who then spoke up was standing opposite Claugh, having blond curly hair, beautiful emerald eyes and looked rather delicate.

“Yeah, besides, you tried to make some moves on a noble’s daughter, and her parents saw through it...and I had to clean things up. You have to know when to stop, Claugh-sempai.”

“Id~iot, Calne. It’s the job of the junior to help the senior when he’s in trouble.”

“I’ll kneel down, I’ll kneel down! When that noble girl was crying away...she even said that you had to bear responsibility...really, she’s not a kitten or a puppy. You've got to restrain yourself!”

“Houhou...speaking of self-restrain, I know you’re secretly having an affair with the mistress of Parl...”

“WHA, WHAT!? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING IN FRONT OF SION-SAMA!?”

Claugh and Calne continued to make noise.

They were good friends in the army before Sion became king, and whether it was during the revolution or when he became king, they continued to work hard for Sion, and were reliable aides, but...

Claugh and Calne were getting louder.

“Really...you’re really not human to make moves on someone else’s wife. No no, I don’t want to become that kind of adult.”

“What adult when you’re just 7 years older than me!? Be, besides, Lady Parl and I are...well...to put it, serious, so it’s fine!”

“You were saying that you were serious the last time you fooled around...”

Sion’s head started to hurt the more he heard about it, and couldn’t help but cup his head.

“You, your voices are too loud. Think about how you would feel if you’re in my shoes too. Really. I got it, I got it. Go find some girls for yourself, Claugh.”

Claugh stuck his tongue out.

“Yes! If it’s the king’s order!”

The tall body unexpectedly slipped into the crowd of nobles and disappeared.

On seeing this, Sion sighed...

“Only at such instances would he call me king...”

At this moment, Sion noticed Calne staring at him with a yearning expression...

“...Okay okay, I got it. I’m fine. Go find that Lady Parl or whatever her name is.”

Calne’s expression sparkled.

“You don’t have to worry about it...but, then, I’ll accept this happily then...”

And he fluttered off.

“These guys, really...try and learn some things from Fiole...”

Sion smiled wryly.

Several ladies dressed in glamorous ornaments eyed at Sion, who was left alone, and walked over...

From their looks, all of them were really dazzling and beautiful. They had beauty that was built from the money the nobles had.

Some women blushed on seeing Sion’s face, and some looked at Sion with confident looks...

“Greetings, Astal-sama.”

“Why are you hiding in such a corner? Come over to the middle of the hall.”

“Please be my dance partner.”

Sion showed a smile on his face and answered back with a tone completely different to the one used with Claugh and Calne.

“Such beautiful ladies. Are you inviting me? Aren’t there other powerful nobles gathered here in this Azure Illusion palace...?”

The women chuckled.

“You really know how to kid around, Astal-sama. There is no other man more charming than you.”

“I see, so you charming women haven’t found any suitable men in this Azure Illusion Palace. Looks like the goddess of luck is smiling at me.”

“You really know how to talk, my lord.”

He continued to smile at the female crowd, and at the same time, noticed six noble men walking towards him. One of them was a skinny, tall and frail looking man, who said, “My king, you’re always so popular.”

Sion smiled back at him,

“Aren’t you Lord Beril, and Lord Parl and Lord Ishruna. Are you still partying today?”

The somewhat middle-aged Ishruna answered,

“We’re surprised that you would organize the Azure Illusion Banquet so glamorously, my King. We’re merely a few individuals who got some pieces of land in the countryside, so this is really a grand banquet we couldn’t imagine at all...as expected of my King.”

“That’s right.”

The nobles all nodded.

Sion narrowed his sharp golden eyes.

“Is that so? Recently, I heard that Lord Pali and Lord Ishruna managed to carry out outstanding management policies in your own respective places. I heard that you managed to earn quite some reward inside the place, right?”

Pali and Ishruna immediately frowned the moment they heard them,
“Mu...”

And let out hesitant sounds. In fact, through Fiole’s investigations, these two had been filling their pockets since the previous king’s rule by charging the people in their land unreasonable taxes...Sion stared at the two of them who were completely silent, but continued to keep a smile on his face and said out some words in a manner of pretense, “Please continue to keep this up and work hard for Roland.”

Parl immediately answered without hesitation,

“Pl, please leave it to us!”

Ishruna immediately added,

“I’m willing to give my all for this country. Right, Mary?”

He said to one of the women who was just talking to Sion.

On hearing that, the woman nodded,

“Yes, my father. We’ll offer our all for our king.”

And then, she started to grab onto Sion’s arm and fawn over him...

The other ladies looked over at her with sharp stares...

At this moment, a young male noble who Sion didn’t know of, who had remained silent, looked like he didn’t want to lose out to the other nobles as he came out from the crowd. He lowered his head in front of Sion, introduced himself, and said, “My king, I’m really sorry about this...but this is what I just heard...”

Sion was puzzled by these unexpected words, and tilted his head,

“Sorry? What are you saying? I don’t understand what you mean...”

The man seemed to be shocked by Sion’s words, and remained silent for a while, before continuing in a panicked manner, “Ahh...well...do, don’t tell me you don’t know of it...? Pa, pardon my rudeness!”

“No, you don’t have to apologize. Speaking of which, what’s going on?”

The young man showed an awkward expression,

“No, well, it’s not really alright for me to say this...”

At this moment, Beril gave a wry smile,

“You don’t have to worry. Isn’t that whetting our appetite?”

“Is, is that so? But saying such a thing in such a grand occasion is really...”

Sion shook his head,

“Don’t worry. Just say it.”

However, the man still looked hesitant, and then, finally seemed to have made his own decision as he lifted his head, “I understand...but in fact, I just heard this from the other nobles...my king, it seemed that Fiole—I think that's the name, can’t really remember that, which had been serving you...the commoner duty officer's mercilessly murdered corpse was discovered...”

Immediately, Sion’s eyes narrowed.

Fiole...?

Was killed...?

These words caused his mind to immediately sink into chaos.

The young man who was still talking to Sion happily just now was...

That youth who was extremely happy when his sister was being discussed?

Impossible. Besides, the rumors of Fiole being killed didn’t reach him yet. Why was it that it reached the nobles’ ears...

At this moment, Beril said,

“This is...really a bloody topic, really unfitting for such an atmosphere. It’s really tragic...however, I suppose we can take comfort that it’s only a commoner who died this time.”

Parl’s face showed a smile,

“It’s just like you said. There would be a large problem if it was a noble killed this time.”

Finally, Ishruna added,

“Alright alright. Don’t say such things. It’s rare for everyone to be happy. Mary, serve the king some wine.”

“Yes, father.”

Mary left Sion to get the wine.

“...I see. So that’s how it is,,,,”

Sion muttered softly,

The nobles couldn’t hear him,

“Eh? What did you say?”

Sion shook his head...

He smiled, showing a smile without malice.

There was nothing more ‘easing’ than this.

“I’m fine. It’s just as you said. It’s really fortunate that it was only a commoner who was killed. I suppose I would be worrying if it was a noble who was killed. It’s great that everyone can say it like that. Thanks, everyone.”

He said this as he smiled and looked around.

And then, he saw several nobles looking away from Sion’s smiling stare...

“ ...”

Sion didn’t stop smiling.

He understood this clearly.

They were always like this.

They were always like this right from the beginning...

He started to feel a murderous intent deep inside his heart. A rage that was enough to cover Sion’s eyes rushed up from within him, but he didn’t show such an expression.

Sion continued to smile.

“Please enjoy the banquet tonight, everyone.”

And then, he forcefully snatched the glass of wine from Mary’s hand.

“My dear lady, can I enjoy a dance?”

“Ah, do I have such an honor?”

“Of course.”

And then,

Sion started to walk towards the middle of the hall.

Using a clear smile without any signs of malice as he endured the stares of countless nobles...

Part 5

It was a very simple room.

This room didn't even have a single item of luxury, just the bare minimum required for living.

A desk, a bed and—

There wasn't even a light with magic as its source, as the light source in the room was a lamp placed on the desk...

In the middle of the room...

The moment he saw that scene,

“.....Damn it...”

Sion muttered softly.

“...Damn it...this is my...”

Fiole...was wrecked, seemingly drowned in blood.

There were all sorts of unnecessary wounds carved into him, as if it was deliberately meant for Sion to see...

“...IT'S ALL MY FAULT!!”

After saying that, he forcefully slammed the wall.

And couldn't feel any pain at all.

He just felt rage that was enough to cover his eyes, and his heart seemed to be covered by a black emotion.

His mind remembered the laughter of the nobles who didn't seem to treat other people's lives like anything, their shallow smiles that didn't understand other people's feelings...

And as he was about to slam the wall viciously again, Clough stopped him

from behind.

“That’s enough, Sion.”

Sion turned around...

He saw his own bloody fist...and narrowed his eyes.

“...Sorry, I won’t do that again. So, can you just let me be alone for the moment?”

But Claugh remained silent with a stern expression.

And Sion asked again,

“Please.”

“...I got it. Let’s go, Calne.”

“But sempai.”

“We’re leaving.”

“...Okay.”

Both of them left the room after saying that, and closed the door.

The room was covered in more darkness than before.

In the darkness, there was a letter placed on the desk that was lit by the lamp.

Sion took the letter.

The letter was written as followed.

Eslina, thank you for writing to me all the time.

I’m sorry for often being unable to reply.

But this brother of yours is happy to hear that you’re healthy, Eslina.

Your grades have been good too. You’ve been working hard.

Your letters always manage to encourage your brother here.

And I’m lucky to have a very good superior.

Astal-sama...the king, he’s a really great man.

*He's able to treat us commoners equally,
and most importantly, he's really thinking for the sake of this country.
It's really great that, that great man is the king of our country.
I'm really proud to be living in the country that great man rules.
If there's a chance, I really want you to meet Astal-sama, Eslina...
Ah, yes. Astal-sama said that he'll give me a vacation
this weekend to let me see you, Eslina.
See? He's a really kind guy, isn't he?
So I'm thinking of seeing you this weekend.
It's been a long time since we met.
Whenever I went back home all the time,
'Mom would make her specialty cheese.
If you can cook as well as mom, Eslina,
you'll definitely make a good bride.
If the groom's Astal-sama...
Well, this isn't something someone
Of my status can say~
Then, that's settled. I hope
To see you this weekend.*

Fiole Folkal

The letter ended here.

The letter showed that Fiole was really looking forward to seeing his sister, and how he was really happy to serve Sion.

The letter was filled with expectations for a bright future.

But this letter was...

Stained by drops of blood...

Sion finished reading the letter...

“What an idiot...didn’t I tell you it has nothing to do with such a stupid thing like status, Fiore...”

He muttered to himself and turned to look at the blood on the floor.

He walked over to the blood that was in such an amount that any ordinary person would have fainted from the sight of it...at the body of the murdered Fiore...

Sion carried him.

“You’re really a big idiot, praising me like this...such a powerless me...who can’t even protect anything...”

The golden eyes showed a sudden flash of sadness that disappeared in the darkness lit by the lamp.

It was just for a moment, and then, those eyes became sharp.

Part 6

After a long moment of silence, Sion took a deep breath.

“Claugh, Calne! Come in.”

As he finished calling, the door was opened.

The two people who entered the room saw Sion’s bloodied clothes, and were speechless.

But Sion didn’t mind.

“Claugh, get ready for Fiole’s funeral immediately. Calne, before the nobles take action, protect Fiole’s little sister Eslina Folkal. We have to let her...meet her brother no matter what...”

Just as he was about to leave the room, Claugh suddenly interrupted him,

“Well, Sion-sama, are you alright? It’s better for us to follow you inside the palace. Fiole has been killed, so the next one might be you, Sion-sama...”

But Sion shook his head.

“The order is wrong, Calne. It’s because they couldn't kill me that they aimed for Fiole.”

Claugh nodded.

“No matter what, the king has that monster watching from beside him, that, Eris’ family’s...”

“Eris...family...huh? Sempai?”

“Ahh, it’s impossible that you don’t know, right? The great noble family protecting the king of Roland, also known as the swordsman clan. Sion is the king now, and the people in their family have been watching him from the shadows. As long as Sion is still in the palace, nobody can kill him.”

Sion shrugged.

“That’s the case. So you’re the ones more likely to be in danger than me. I don’t want to lose my trusted subordinates again.”

Claugh chuckled in a relaxed manner.

“It’s impossible for them to kill us who’ve been through the revolution. Besides, Fiole’s case here gave a warning to us. I’ll tell the rest to be careful.”

“Nn, I’ll leave it to you.”

After saying that, Sion left the room.

Part 7

The starry sky was still dazzling.

On the passage leading to the palace,

Sion stopped, and looked up at the sky...

A sound that came from somewhere rang...

It was a calm voice, but had a sense of madness in it...

“Sadness, hatred, anger, regret, revenge, resignation, what kind of feeling lies deep within your heart?”

He could only hear the voice, and even if he looked around, no one was there.

Sion understood this clearly, so he continued to look up at the sky,

“Everything, Lucile. No, resignation is the only thing which is not here.”

He answered to the emptiness.

Facing the invisible...head of the Eris family, Lucille Eris.

That voice rang again, this time giving an innocent laugh,

“Do you really feel like taking revenge on those despicable people?”

“Of course I do.”

Sion answered.

And then—

Suddenly, a man appeared in Sion’s sights.

Like he was standing there right from the beginning

The blond long hair, the extremely inhumanly beautiful face, the shut eyes,

In the darkness, the crimson red lips gave a smirk like a devil—

Lucille opened his arms wide.

“Then, let’s kill them all. I’ll help you out since I’m good at this.”

He shot out a powerful demonic presence and a maddening delight.

That presence alone had a suffocating killing intent...

But Sion smiled.

“No, there’s no need. Fiole doesn’t wish for this to happen as well. The time is not ripe yet. Just wait for a while until everything’s ready. Once that is done, we can annihilate them all in one go.”

“Fuun, do you intend to endure this until then? Until you tremble and bite your lips so hard that you bleed?”

Blood was already dripping from the smiling Sion’s face. Unknowingly, he already bit through it...

Sion wiped away the blood on his lips.

“I’ll endure it. No, if I say that I want to take revenge now, you’ll definitely kill me here, right? That’s why you appeared now, isn’t it?”

Lucille showed a devilish smile.

“An incompetent king, a king who can’t grasp the timing, a weak-hearted king...is not needed.”

After saying that, Lucille’s body disappeared as quickly as the time he appeared...

Sion watched this, and felt that his strength got sucked off as he sighed.

“I’m a little depressed now...maybe it’s because I didn’t sleep well... Fiole is right. I better sleep well today...”

The moon was covered.

The moment the clouds covered the night, the surrounding stars looked even brighter.

It’s like those many stars were waiting for the moonlight to weaken...

Like how they were waiting for the king’s power to weaken...

“...Really...this is really a nest full of monsters and desires...I’m a little envious...of Ryner’s group, travelling away in a relaxed manner...”

Sion stretched his back at the starry sky.

“They should be in Nelpha now.”

And muttered softly.

Chapter 2 The girl, the demon and...

Part 1

It's morning on the streets where people were moving around.

On the neatly arranged streets, there were carriages carrying goods moving around.

The streets had many buildings that were completely different from Roland's on both sides.

The Nelpha Imperial's capital—Elarun was filled with life.

In this country that had an exotic feel to it, Ryner,

"Haa...I'm tired. I can't do this anymore. My stomach is empty. I feel like sleeping...it feels like I've been walking all this time recently...and speaking of which, I'm sick and tired of hearing 'peaceful journey' and 'peaceful'! I'm this kind of person anyway! I'm really amazing for being able to hang on up till now. I'm awesome! But I can't take this anymore! Let's go find an inn! An inn! Alright, if this keeps up, I've decided to sleep for the next ten days!!"

He was completely emotional, and there was no trace of delicacy on him.

As for Ferris, she had no sense of sentimentality to these foreign streets as she said with the usual emotionless expression, "Fmm...looking for an inn when it's merely morning...I see, so that's how you lure women into an inn, and continue to do things to her for the next 10 days...the king is definitely right. You're really a sex maniac."

"...What in the world are you saying?"

Ryner couldn't help but ask back, and Ferris shook her head with a 'you don't have to understand this' expression,

"I read similar books before, which said that when a man invites a lady to the inn, he will definitely say something like 'I'll definitely not do anything, just a little tired here, so I'm getting some sleep'. Once they reach the inn, the man

will immediately change into a beast and run rampant.”

“Why...did you just say it so clearly and realistically...NOT! WAIT, ARE YOU MISTAKEN SOMEWHERE!? HOW CAN I POSSIBLY DO SUCH A THING!?”

Ferris remained silent for a moment, and then glanced at Ryner,

“Nn, that’s true. A super master-class pervert like you who would lure women of young and old before attacking them violently will definitely not go about doing this in such a roundabout way.”

“...MA, MASTER-CLASS PERVERT...IS THAT SOMETHING THAT KING TAUGHT YOU TOO!?”

“No, that’s just a bad impression I have of you after going around with you for a long time.”

“AH? I SAY, I’VE NEVER DONE ANYTHING LIKE THAT BEFORE!!!”

Ferris ignored Ryner’s yells as she continued to walk forward,

“Nn, well, playtime is over. Let’s go and find the library before we look for the inn.”

On hearing that, Ryner immediately felt limp,

“Play...playtime...were you fooling around? Just now?”

“Fufu.”

As he watched Ferris walk far off, Ryner felt even more lethargic,

“I’ve been played...”

He muttered like a fool and again followed behind her slowly...

Part 2

The library was at the center of the city.

It was a rather large building, escorted by several men who looked like guards. It's rumored that there was a lot of important information inside the library as well. On seeing that, Ryner's eyes immediately sparkled, "Oh, this is amazing. There should be a lot of information I want to find."

Ferris nodded,

"Nn, let's hurry up and go in to start the investigations."

Ryner said in response to such a cold tone,

"I say...what you mean is that I have to investigate the large number of books here one by one, right? It's tiring! Say something that will encourage me. You look like a beauty anyway...un, let me think, how about a 'do your best!' or I'm looking forward ♥' or something like that? Anyway, I hate to be forced to do something..."

Fm, as Ferris was nodding away,

Kiin!!

The sharp sound of a blade being drawn could be heard.

Immediately, Ryner's neck felt Ferris' sword...

Ryner tried to raise his voice and said,

"Ah...er...ah...I suddenly feel that I may be very motivated here...uu...so, you do have some intent of moving that sword slightly further away, right?"

Ferris nodded in a satisfied manner and sheathed her sword,

"Your head will fly off the next time. How about that? Do you have any motivation now?"

“.....I’ll definitely be killed by you one day...”

The two of them who obviously looked like they’re having an improving relationship encouraged each other as they moved forward to the library.

Just when both of them were about to enter the library...

Suddenly,

“Oi, you two, hold it there!”

“Naa?”

Several guards and a snowy-white bearded old man called them. Ryner looked back.

The old man looked at Ryner, and then looked at Ferris,

“Who, who exactly are you people? This place isn’t one that barbarians like you can enter!”

On hearing that, Ryner tilted his head,

“Ah? Barbarians? What are you saying?”

For some reason, Ferris, who was standing beside him, just nodded away as if it was to be expected,

“Fm, I see, so that must be it. How you’ve been attacking women walking every night and abducting them had been exposed...”

“THAT’S ENOUGH, SHUT UP! Haa...what’s with these people...never mind. Anyway...uncle. Why are we barbarians who can’t enter the library?”

The old man gave an ‘are you an idiot’ look at Ryner,

“Fuun. You don’t know what’s this about? As expected of you barbarians! This library we’re protecting is the source of sacred knowledge! It’s absolutely ridiculous!”

That’s what I have to say. On hearing these words, Ryner looked at his equipment...

Ryner looked at his unique battle armor that had a white armor plate and a

rope. As it's made from rope, it could still be passable...but Ferris' longsword at her waist and the leather armor were clearly 'weapons'. Ryner reluctantly said, "Well, it's true that it doesn't match the attire to enter a library..."

Ferris nodded as well,

"It's true that it'll be even more dangerous if a sex maniac is equipped with weapons."

"I say, I feel that your attire is a lot more problematic than mine."

Ferris didn't seem to understand what he said as she shook her head...

"A beautiful person may wear whatever she wants without a problem."

And she actually said that...

"..."

Ryner was speechless, and the guards and the old men were speechless as well...

For some reason, Ferris, who herself said such a thing, started to blush,

"Tha, that was a joke..."

Immediately, the old man clenched his fists and said,

"You pass! You pass! You're a beauty and extremely cute! This old man here admits defeat! Like you say, anything you wear fits a beauty like you. Forget about that. Do you have any interest to be this old man's grandson's wife...no, my wife!?"

The guard behind grabbed the old man suddenly,

"Oi oi, don't go wild, old man! Ca, can you be my lover!?"

"Wait a second! It's better to date me than such a person, right!?"

Ferris entered the library while such a conversation continued,

"What the heck is this..."

As he said this, Ryner kept his eyes half-opened and wanted to follow her in from behind. At this moment,

The old man suddenly kicked Ryner away,

“Didn’t I say that barbarians can’t enter the library!”

“AH!? I SAY, WHY IS IT THAT I CAN’T YET FERRIS CAN!”

“YOU IDIOT. THAT’S WHY I SAID THAT IT’S IMPOSSIBLE TO TALK THROUGH TO BARBARIANS LIKE YOU! HAVEN’T YOU HEARD OF HOW BEAUTIES CAN BE FORGIVEN FOR DOING ANYTHING!!?”

“OF COURSE NOT! AH, I SEE! YOU GUYS STILL DON’T KNOW ABOUT THAT WOMAN’S SAVAGE NATURE. THAT’S WHY YOU’RE SAYING THIS. DON’T BLAME ME WHEN YOU REGRET THIS!”

Ferris said with an emotionless expression,

“Nn. That’s the revenge of someone who was dumped, was it? You’re a sad man for saying bad things about your ex.”

“FORGET ABOUT WHETHER I WAS DUMPED OR NOT, I’VE NEVER BEEN DATING YOU!!”

Let’s ignore the low level conversation that’s going on at the library...

At this moment, suddenly, there were voices,

“WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU’RE DOING, YOU BRATS!? WATCH ME KILL YOU!!!”

“KYAAAAAAAAAAHHH!!!”

Angry shouts and cries rang...

“What is it?”

“Nn.”

Ryner and Ferris stopped arguing as well as they turned their heads in that direction.

There were several savage looking men in the middle of the road.

Right in front of them was a 5, 6 year old kid and a little girl who was carrying a large book and looking back at the pale-looking kid, And also, there was a youth who was standing in front of the men to protect the two kids.

“What are you trying to do?”

The stern voice came from a brown haired youth who was staring at those men with a forceful expression. He looked kind, but for some reason, showed a presence of nobility on his face. Looking at the situation, it's definitely impossible for him to take on so many savages alone, but even so, the youth continued with an adamant voice, "Ibel is still a kid. Don't kick him."

The men stared at this youth.

"Ahh? Who do you think you are? The older brother of these brats? What do you intend to do? Those brats kicked my foot?"

The youth just shook his head,

"The way I look at things here, it looked like you were deliberately aiming to hit Ibel."

"WHAT DID YOU SAY, YOU PUNK!? MY CLOTHES ARE ALL DIRTIED BECAUSE OF THIS DIRTY KID! ARE YOU GOING TO PAY ME BACK!?"

"...I see. So you've been trying to do this right from the beginning. But I can't succumb to evil-doing in front of my siblings. That'll be teaching them the wrong thing."

"HAH!? YOU WANT TO BE BEATEN UP HERE!?"

The girl and the boy who got up looked at the youth worriedly,

"To, Toale nii-chan. Are you alright?"

"Can you win?"

However, the youth called Toale suddenly changed from his old peaceful expression into a sharp smile,

"Impossible. But you definitely can't let them do anything to you. So you better run away while I hold them off!"

""Eh!?"""

The boy and the girl cried out at the same time.

After that, the youth started fighting against the 5 men.

As he hit one, he got hit back by another, and he would then be kicked when he gasped.

“Alright! Hurry up and run, Ibel, Telua!”

“Bu, but...”

Such a scene.

Ryner and company were staring in a seemingly dazed manner,



“What do you think?”

“Um, seems like there’s someone like you there. That guy called Toale or something seems rather honest.”

“...No, I’m not referring to that...well, you’re not going to save them?”

Ferris remained unmoved by these words and said weakly,

“Nn? Have you eyed that girl this time? As long as I’m around, I won’t allow such an evil person to exist.”

Ferris said to Ryner with a wry expression,

“...Ahh, why is it always me? Now I’m starting to understand your feelings when you interact with others...more than that, the bad guys should be them and not me, right? Really, what are you thinking, capturing a good guy like me? Alright, go help them.”

“Too troublesome. I’m not going.”

“Me too.”

“...”

Just like that, Ryner and Ferris glared at each other.

“I say, you’re really a cold person!”

“I don’t want to hear that from a woman attacker.”

And started on their meaningless argument while ignoring the fact that they had to save someone.

In the end, these two still seemed to be a long distance away from being on good terms with each other...

Leaving this aside,

While they’re arguing back and forth, Toale was captured by the men and had his neck grabbed.

“What a waste of time. Not a bad image you have there. Do you want to die like that? HAH!?”

“Guu...damn it...”

The boy who hadn't run away yet continued to grab the man who was grabbing Toale's neck.

"Don, don't bully onii-chan...ukywa!?"

He got kicked easily by the man. The girl then raised the book in her hands.

"O, onii-chan! I'll go save you now!!"

And rushed forward.

"Uu...don't come over! Run away!"

This scene could make anyone weep...

The man launched a punch the girl...and this time, it was really a hit to the girl's face...

Ryner watched it,

"Ahhh..."

Suddenly, he showed a serious expression, and then immediately showed a serious look,

"No way! Damn it!"

He rushed over.

Immediately,

Ryner's body slid at a high speed, unlike the lifeless and unmotivated look he gave before and immediately got between the girl and the man, "Alright."

He grabbed the girl, and was faster than the fist the man swung out,

"Hoi!"

He kicked the man's face and sent him facing away,

The man fell onto the floor and passed out,

After seeing that, Ryner put the girl down and heaved a sigh,

"Fuu, that was dangerous..."

The girl continued to show a terrified look, and then said with a soft voice,

"Tha, thank you..."

At this moment, Ryner took the book in the girl's hands,

"This is a book I want to investigate on. It's an old book, and it'll be bad if you ruin it by using it to hit...that was close..."

The girl widened her eyes at Ryner,

As for the other men,

"WH, WHO THE HELL ARE YOU, YOU BASTARD!?"

Ryner looked at the men who were really annoying,

"This is bad...my body instinctively moved on its own...really, didn't I just save them in the end...? That means I ended up teaching you guys a lesson because you dared to disturb us?...uaa, how troublesome..."

He continued to show a lifeless and lethargic look even in this situation...

That's to be expected.

"WHAT'S WITH YOU!? APPEARING OUT OF A SUDDEN AND KICKING SOMEONE AWAY? THAT'S TOO DESPICABLE!!"

"LOOKS LIKE YOU GUYS NEED TO BE TAUGHT A LESSON AS WELL?"

Ryner sighed in the face of the raging men,

"...Even if you guys say that I'm despicable...ah! That's right!"

He clapped his hands as if he just thought of something in his mind,

"Actually, I didn't kick you guys, you know? It was just a coincidence as that guy hit my sole...didn't you say something like this happened? It's the same as that, so let's just let bygones be bygones..."

"HOW WAS THAT POSSIBLE!?"

The men roared and started to attack.

Ryner continued to remain relaxed,

"Ahh, I'm already so tired from the trip. I don't really want to move my body..."

And continued to turn his back on the enemy,

“Then, Missy, can you please hold this book for a while?”

“Eh? Ah...o, okay. Wah, danger!”

The girl cried out.

At the same time, Ryner moved his body slightly, and the man’s fist missed.

Ryner continued to slowly grab his wrist, trip the feet and caused him to flip.

Just when Ryner was doing this lethargic motion, the man spun around at an unbelievable speed...

“WAH!?”

And slammed hard into the ground with tremendous impact before being unable to move,

There were three left,

“Wha, WHAT WAS THAT!?”

“DON’T YOU DARE LOOK DOWN ON US!!”

“DIE!!”

The men all charged forward,

Ryner didn’t strike a pose at all as he continued to face them with a tired look...

He deflected the first man’s fist and kicked him in the chest with one leg...or rather, seemed to press on him gently with the toes of his foot. The man behind raised a fist and charged forward.

The next moment, with a painful sounding echo, the man’s fist hit the first man.

“Ah, IT HURTS, IT HURTS...STOP IT!!”

And this man’s body just rolled away easily.

Also, the other man who wanted to rush over forgot to attack as he was dumbstruck due to such an incident, and walked over...

“Ah, ah, ah...”

And showed a terrified expression on his face,

“Okay, that’s that...”

He used a karate chop on the neck...

And the man fainted.

5 men were taken down onto the ground in an instant...

Toale, the boy and the girl were all looking over in a dumbstruck manner,

But to the person Ryner himself, this wasn’t anything much...

Besides, he was raised in an abnormal environment where people were all treated as fighting machines and taught all sorts of things...

Also...

(There’s a woman who’s standing there and not thinking of anything about this...)

On thinking about this, Ryner started to grumble unhappily.

“I say, why must I do such a tough job? Couldn’t you have done it, Ferris? Those guys would definitely have been defeated in an instant. Besides, my main skills are magic spells, you know? I can’t just let people from Nelpha see Roland’s magic, so you should be doing this, Ferris. Un, that’s right. I’m definitely right here. That person’s personality is rotten to the core...”

He grumbled as he walked over to the little girl...

But at this moment,

The unexpectedly sharp attack suddenly appeared right in front of Ryner’s eyes,

“WHAT!?”

Ryner tried his best to dodge it,

But that attack was way too fast—

He couldn’t dodge this at all!

To Ryner, who was able to easily dodge those men’s attacks, he couldn’t even react to this attack at all, which showed that the enemy attacking him now was

so terrifying...

Ryner got hit in the face...

“Ah.”

And collapsed on the ground...

Then—

That terrifying enemy started to kick Ryner...

“Nn, now all the bad guys are taken out. The girl over there, that was dangerous...this guy is a serial culprit of abducting young girls. If I wasn't around...”

Ferris was making an expression that showed that it was too horrifying for her to continue as she shook her head reluctantly...with that, Ryner...

“I~say, what are you trying to do...WAH!?”

Ryner's words were interrupted as Ferris stamped on his back viciously.

Ferris continued to step on Ryner and said,

“Whose personality is rotten to the core?”

“GYAAAAHHH!!? YOU HEARD THAT!? I SAY, IT, IT HURTS! SORRY!”

“Nn.”

Toale, the boy and the girl continued to stare at this couple, not knowing what's going on between the two of them up till now...

Toale tentatively,

“We, well...thank you for saving us.”

Said that out.

Ryner, who was on the ground, and Ferris, who was stomping on Ryner, looked over at him at the same time,

“Ahh~...if you really feel grateful, help me find a way to get this devil...
uKYAAAAHHH!!?”

“Nn, that's right. It's better to execute a devil who abducts young girls now.”

What in the world were they saying...?

Well, such a thing was commonplace, and they would continue until they got sick and tired of it...

Ryner was finally released, and stood up.

At this moment, the boy and the girl were cuddled up with Toale and relieved that they were fine.

Ryner looked at them with a sleepy expression.

“Ahh, then, what do we do? It’ll be meaningless if I can’t go into the library either way? Anyway, let’s try and keep the armor somewhere and buy some clothes.”

Ferris nodded.

“Nn, but let’s leave that for now. Don’t you want the book in that girl’s hands.”

For a moment, Ryner didn’t understand what that mean, and once he did, his face blushed red,

“...Ah, ahh that’s right! Yes, that’s it! If it’s not like that, I wouldn’t be doing such a troublesome thing. Yes.”

Ryner started to rattle away.

Ferris continued to stare at Ryner with her emotionless eyes, and nodded,

“I see, so you do have some wild thoughts on that little girl...”

“I SAY, WHY ARE YOU THINKING OF SUCH A THING NOW!? BESIDES, DIDN’T YOU JUST REMAIN THERE STANDING WITHOUT DOING ANYTHING!?”

“Nn. That’s because I’m not just a beauty. I have a pure heart that’s full of love like an angel.”

Ferris’ words caused Ryner to imagine angels like her with otherworldly beauty and devilish hearts roaming the heavens...

“...I, guess, it’s alright to go to hell now...”

“What are you saying?”

“No...please don’t mind me...”

Toale walked towards the duo who were continuing their conversation that was without worth.

And smiled at the two of them.

“Thank you for saving my siblings here. Please allow me to repay your kindness...”

Ryner looked back at Toale and showed a complete lack of enthusiasm,

“Ah—don’t mind. It’ll be troublesome...let’s go then, Ferris.”

“Alright.”

Both of them walked away.

Toale spaced out in silence for a moment, and then chased after them immediately,

“Eh, well...I, I can’t allow this. I can’t let you walk away without repaying your graciousness. I won’t be able to set a good example for my siblings here. Please, just let me help out in some way...”

However, even after hearing it, Ryner and Ferris never looked back,

“Ah~I’m so tired today...isn’t that right, Ferris? Let’s forget about everything else and go find an inn to stay at as soon as possible.”

“...Are you thinking of...”

“ABSOLUTELY NOT!”

Both of them continued to walk further away...

Toale could only give up...

A depressed voice could be heard from behind Ryner’s group,

“Can’t be helped then. Ibel, telua. Go return the book to grandpa Ganiel at the library. Big brother here will buy ingredients for dinner.”

“Okay~”

Immediately.

In response to Toale's words...

Ryner and Ferris stared at each other, and then immediately turned around—

Ryner said,

“Ahh—now that I think about it, it's better to let you repay us.”

“Nn. We can't reject other people's kind intentions.”

Toale showed a bothered look in regards to Ryner's group's sudden change in attitude, but immediately smiled.

“That's great. If I can't repay the ones who saved me, I won't know how to continue on. Then, let's come over to my house to talk...”

But Ryner immediately refused,

“No, can you help us get into the library instead? The uncle over there hates us and doesn't want us to enter.”

Ryner looked at the entrance of the library.

At the entrance, the old man and the guards were hidden behind the pillars and watching Ryner's group, who had just beaten the punks.

Once they noticed Ryner's stare, the old man poked his head out,

“No, no way! A violent barbarian like you looks way too suspicious. I won't let you pass as long as my eyes are still black!”

Though he was saying that with a rather forceful voice, the old man's entire body was hidden behind the pillar...

Ryner shrugged and looked lethargically at Toale.

“See? You look like you know the library uncle very well. See if you can convince him? There's a lot of information that we have to investigate about no matter what.”

I see. Toale nodded and said to the old man with an adamant voice,

“Oi, grandpa Ganiel, these people helped me out here, you know? Aren't you going to let them in?”

The old man's attitude changed completely as he stuttered and answered,

“Th, that...I didn’t see them help you, Toale-sama...but I have a duty I have to fulfill...there’s too much important information in this library...”

Toale’s tone became heavier.

“I suppose your duty didn’t include protecting me as you were hiding over there the entire time.”

“We, well...”

“I’ll say it again. These two people saved me, so I want to repay them. It’s just right that I repay the ones who helped me, right? You’ll let them through, I suppose?”

“U...I, I understand. It can’t be helped...since Toale-sama said so...”

In response to this conversation, Ryner and Ferris looked at each other...

Part 3

It's now time for a change in location inside the library.

As expected of the tight security (even so, the guards were somewhat gutless) protecting it, the facilities inside the library were pretty sufficient.

The books of all ages hidden inside were neatly arranged, leaving no gaps in between.

Also, this library wasn't open to civilians, but only to outstanding students who were specially chosen, nobles and people of high status.

That was the one reason Ryner's group was turned away by the guards.

In other words...

Right now, since they were allowed into the library just like this...and that person, Toale, convinced the old man Ganiel who was so against Ryner's group from entering, Toale would either be an outstanding student or someone of the higher class...

"Uwaa—amazing. Then, Toale, Ibel, Telua, please get that and that and also that book over there. That one too. Ahh, Ferris, get that...ahh, just kidding, just kidding, you don't have to do anything, sorry! So please at least sheath your sword in the library...really...erm next...ah, uncle, help me get paper and pen. Alright, let's start..."

Ryner's sparkling eyes looked at the books around him as he sat at the seat prepared for him before directing everyone.

Toale and the rest nodded and started running around the library according to his orders...

On seeing this, the old man Ganiel's face was flushed red as he roared at Ryner,

“YOU, YOU Itsuki! LET ALONE BARKING ORDERS AT ME, EVEN IF YOU SAVED TOALE-SAMA, DON’T GET TOO COCKY!! DON’T FORGET ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF OUR LORD!!”

Ryner was obviously uninterested with regards to these words,

“Really? Who is he? What nobility is he from?”

The old man suddenly straightened his chest,

“Fufu. Don’t be surprised when you hear this. I tell you, Toale-sama is the royal grandson of the emperor of Nelpha Imperial, Gread Nelphi-sama!!”

The old man said these words proudly,

However—

Ryner merely said,

“Heh—I see. That’s really great. Ah, Toale, not that book, the big one beside it.”

“Ah, sorry, this book?”

“Yes, that one. Help me get that over here.”

“Understood.”

At this moment, a voice echoed in the library,

“YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING AT AAALLLLL!!!!!!”

A very loud voice.

Such a loud voice echoed in the library, causing Ryner and Toale to turn to look at him...

“Oi, uncle. Your face is flushed. Are you dyi...”

“OF COURSE NOT! NOT THAT! YOU Itsuki, WERE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME!!? THAT LORD IS THE ROYAL GRANDSON OF EMPEROR NELPHA!!”

On hearing that, Ryner looked sleepy as he tilted his head,

“I heard that. Didn’t I say that it’s great? Is that something to be shocked over? Is there a problem...”

“THERE’RE A LOT OF PROBLEMS!!? YOU CONTINUED TO TELL TOALE-SAMA TO DO THIS AND THAT EVEN AFTER HEARING THOSE WORDS. WHAT ARE YOU DOING!!?”

“Well, since you asked me what am I doing...isn’t it troublesome for me to get the book myself?”

“Trouble...some, you say?...I’M GOING TO KILL YOU!! UNFORGIVABLE!! I’LL USE THESE HANDS OF MINE TO...”

The old man rolled up his sleeves and raised his fist...

“Don’t be like that, grandpa Ganiel.”

Holding several books with one hand, Toale showed a troubled expression.

The old man panicked and took the book from his hands.

“To, Toale-sama, really, what are you thinking? Listening to a stranger commanding you...the name of the Nelpha Imperial will be weeping!!”

But Toale frowned and shook his head.

"I feel that Nelpha’s name will be crying if I don’t repay this kindness...also, I was a kid born from a woman my father picked up from the wayside, so I’m just like dumped goods. Someone like me can’t act great all of a sudden.”

On hearing these words, Ryner showed some interest for the first time. He looked at Toale’s sister Telua who was reading with Ferris, “I see. So it’s because of that that you’re different from other nobles and don’t have quite the twisted personality, huh? Sure does feel like the king...”

Before he even finished, Ryner stopped...

The reason was because Ferris, who would never show a change in expression no matter how great the crisis, suddenly blushed...

And the girl who was reading enthusiastically with Ferris,

“Right? It’s amazing, isn’t it? This is a book I would often read secretly when Toale nii-chan goes shopping, but you must hide it from everyone else, okay? Well, to put it...it’s top secret, I guess? Ah, that’s it.”

Ferris nodded. “I understand...but...Nelpha’s education has already reached

such a low age limit...this is a great threat to Roland.”

She said as she flipped the next page...

“Wha!? This...is really unbelievable...”

Ryner stared at the book that caused emotions to appear on the normally stoic Ferris,

And that book’s name was ‘Busty Mature Woman’s...

“HEY!!! WHAT ARE YOU TWO READING!!!”

He rushed over to snatch the book. Ferris then regained her usual emotionless expression,

“Nn. This girl’s really showing me the top secret information of Nelpha Imperial...”

“I say...don’t you feel that it’s bad for a kid’s education to be reading such things at such a young age...”

“That’s true. I only read the prologue...but I feel that those who read this book will become an adult like you...”

“I’ve never read such a book before...but it feels like I can’t do my research properly with you around...”

At this moment, the old man suddenly,

“Oh, it’s about time for the library to close. Okay, everyone, time to go home for today.”

“Ah!? Wait, what’s this? I finally managed to gather the information, you know? I’m already planning on researching through now...”

The old man’s lips curl up slightly, showing a mischievous smirk.

“Nope. You only requested Toale-sama to let you into this library only, right? That means the gratitude had been repaid, isn’t it? That means it’s over. Alright, time to go.”

“I say...no way. We just came in just, and I haven’t even researched anything yet.”

But the old man's face was showing a much happier expression,
"Fufu. I don't know about this though. You can only blame yourselves for being too late."

Also, Ferris nodded in agreement seriously this time,
"The old one's right, Ryner. It's because you read such a dirty book with a name like <<Busty Mature Woman's Journey Diary 4>> that caused this situation."

"THAT WAS YOU WASN'T IT!? OR RATHER...ahh, I'm really tired..."
Ryner sighed hard,
This time, Toale chuckled kindly,
"That's right. The sun is setting today. How about we borrow the books back and carry out research at my home? Ryner-san, Ferris-san?"

"What!? To, Toale-sama...even if you say so...you're still Emperor Nelpha's..."
But Toale shook his head,
"Grandpa Ganiel, don't make me repeat this again. He's my savior here, you know? I have to repay him. And to the people in this country, I...no, we aren't important. I'm definitely that man's...Nelpha Imperial's prince's son...but that's all. My mom was a commoner, so we were all dumped into a house. It's because of that man's foolhardiness now that he kept getting one child after another, and the siblings in our house continued to increase. However, there is no one to breastfeed the kids in that house! My mom was forced away when we were still kids...I'm the only one who can be considered a guardian."

As he said that, Toale pulled Ibel and Telua over, patting them on the head,
"Do you think that someone who grew up under such an environment can appear on stage?"

"We, well...but, we, no, the people in the country really respect you for being able to raise children alone and say hello to us so kindly. Also, your studies were really outstanding when you were with prince Starnel, Toale-sama..."

And Toale could only smile wryly,

“That’s just your worries, grandpa Ganiel.”

But Ganiel looked serious,

“No, the people who really worry about the country can tell. Right now, a lot of officials rely on your ability and view you as a window to the people’s voices and would often talk to you. And also, ever since you became this window, this capital...no, this country had been gradually becoming rich...this is something every citizen in this country knows. There’re a lot of nobles and officials who support you too...so, if possible, please guide this country...”

But Toale stuck his tongue out,

“No~way, I like this life that is easygoing and without burden. If possible...I hope to take care of my siblings without letting them touch any filth...besides, if anyone else hears your words, grandpa Ganiel, they’ll arrest me, you know? It’s because my grades were outstanding that I was chased out by that man’s legitimate children. The officials were the same...they were secretly talking to me to prevent the princes from finding out...it’s because I wasn’t officially accepted by them? Me being a king like this? No way, I don’t have such a right. Then, Ryner-san.”

Toale turned around and smiled,

“What books do you need? You can carry them all if you can. I don’t know if my cooking suits your tastes, but allow me to serve you.”

The kids then followed up,

“Toale nii-chan’s dishes are really good!! I’m really looking forward to it! Right, Telua?”

“Un!”

Ryner couldn’t help but moan as he saw Toale and the rest,

“Ahh~...now I finally know why Toale can handle the expectations of the people. He has a similar background to the king...but has a completely different personality from that rotten king. Always spreading baseless rumors that I like older women...”

Ferris nodded in agreement,

“...That king actually said that he would destroy the dango shop...that’s really something only the devil will do...”

Both of them continued chatting since he wasn’t around.

Toale carried the pile of books that he himself didn’t look like he could carry right in front of them,

“Okay, let’s go. We still have a lot of kids at home. It might be a little noisy, but I hope to introduce my savior to them.”

Ibel then shouted,

“HURRY UP!”

Telua then grabbed Ferris’ hand and walked out of the library,

“Onee-chan, I have some more amazing books at home!”

On seeing this, the old man showed an anguished expression,

“Damn it...how pitiful...those kids, leaving aside their status, they don’t even have relatives...can, can anything be done...”

But on hearing his words, Ryner narrowed his eyes,

“Low status, no relatives, pitiful? That’s not right. That’s called happiness, uncle. Besides, those kids all...”

But Ryner didn’t finish his words,

“SUCH IRRESPONSIBLE WORDS! WHAT DO YOU KNOW!?”

The old man glared at Ryner angrily,

That stare...

Ryner took that stare that had some sadness in the usual lethargic-looking eyes...

“...You’re the one who doesn’t understand.”

The library was already far behind him.

Part 4

And for a change in scenery, it's now back to the Roland Empire.

The wooden sword let out a sharp trajectory as it swung over, and the girl finally managed to use the wooden sword in her own hands to block the attack...

“Au!?”

However, the attack that wasn't completely blocked hit her head mercilessly. Fresh blood splattered in the air.

The girl fell onto the ground viciously, but she continued to struggle and get into position as she raised the wooden sword in her hands, looking very nervous.

She was a girl with cute hair,

Her flaxen-colored hair was tied in a ponytail and she looked like she was about to cry. However, not one single tear dropped from those large red eyes.

She was about 15, 16 years old.

The mouth on her nice looking face was bleeding due to the impact just now...

Even so, the girl shook her head to keep herself conscious and stared at the men in front of her.

The two swordsmen were wielding wooden swords, all looking rather strong.

No matter how it looked, she couldn't win. One could just understand by feeling the atmosphere. The five of them were really strong...the girl frowned and looked afar at the middle-aged man who was staring at her with stern eyes...

At this moment, the man spoke,

“Go.”

Immediately, three swordsmen wielding wooden swords all attacked.

The girl was already aware that she couldn't take on three people at once and immediately threw her wooden sword away.

She then moved her hands in the air and drew a magic array.

It was the magic activation method Roland had,

“What I seek is thunder>>>...eh!?”

But before the girl could even complete the magic array, one of the swordsmen threw a wooden sword right at the girl and hit her straight in the chest. The sharp pain prevented the magic array from being drawn— The other swordsmen used this opening to attack the girl's neck with the wooden swords...

Will I be wiped out here?

Immediately, the girl subconsciously closed her eyes.

However...

The impact didn't come as expected.

She opened her eyes slowly, and found that the wooden sword stopped right at her neck...

The swordsman looked at the middle-aged man she's been looking at and asked in a respectable manner,

“Then...the victor's decided...what should we do, Callaud-sama?”

But the half-white haired gentleman who was called Callaud stared at the girl with icy cold eyes,

“Why must you stop? Continue to swing at Milk with the wooden sword.”

“WHAT!? If, if I do that...ojou-sama's life will likely be in danger...”

The swordsman raised his voice in shock.

However, the man didn't let the swordsman continue as he continued with a calm tone,

“If she died, she’s just like that. I’ll buy another new child. If that girl is still a member of the Callaud family, she will be able to handle such a situation. If not, I don’t need such a child.”

Such cold words.

Of course, the swordsman continued to show hesitation as he didn’t swing the wooden sword,

“DO IT!!”

As Callaud roared, he could only turn to look at this girl called Milk,

“Sorry!”

He swung down the sword in his hands.

An unbelievable impact spread from the neck.

“Kuu...”

The other swordsmen then swung their wooden swords,

“Ugh...ah!?...AHHH...”

Milk felt pain spreading all over her body as her consciousness gradually faded.

If she continued to get hit like this, she would, most probably, die.

That’s how it seemed.

She felt pain, she felt like crying. It was an area of despair for her.

Milk, who collapsed on the ground, saw the man standing there.

Her father.

The father who bought her.

Yes, Milk was the puppet of this man.

A puppet who was bought.

In the Roland Empire, though it couldn’t be revealed openly, the accursed style was common knowledge during the ex-king’s era.

They were puppets treated as substitutes for their own children, a way to

increase their accomplishments in the army...

Milk was such a puppet who was bred by the great noble family Callaud...

Useless puppets were unwanted.

Useless puppets were thrown away...

It was such a life.

She had been going through what can be viewed as an abnormal military training...

Her tears were flowing out.

Such a daily life...

If I continued, I might as well be dead...

She thought of this many times.

She continued to be beaten by the wooden swords...

The pain gradually subsided, and her consciousness faded away...

However—

Her mind suddenly remembered those words.

The one who spoke was a black haired boy.

The face of that boy who was lacking in presence, always looking tired, extremely unmotivated, but had a kind look.

He said,

“You really like to cry. Don’t say that you’ll die. If it’s you, you can definitely do it because you’re strong. I don’t have any intention to die, so...”

So...

Milk opened her eyes and stopped her crying.

She continued to try and move the wrists that were in so much pain that they had no strength in them,

“So, don’t die...don’t die...don’t die...”

She continued to repeat the boy’s words softly, again, and again.

She moved her hands behind her and drew a magic array of light in a place the opponents didn't notice.

And then...

"What I seek is water mist>>> Misumi."

Immediately, the magic array Milk drew from behind gathered a compressed fluid before turning into an exploding torrent that released itself to the ground.

Milk's body was thrown into the air by the compressed water as the pressure rushed at the swordsmen.

"Uwa!?"

"What!?"

The swordsmen all lost their balance due to the sudden attack surprising them as they were washed away by the water.

Milk saw this, and drew a magic array in the air again.

She flipped in the air and jumped towards a place without water. At the same time...

"What I seek is thunder>>>..."

She raised the hand in front of her...

And let out a weak voice due to the pain,

"Everyone, don't move. If you move, I'll send the electricity to the center of the water. If that happens, you, who were drenched in water, will all be electrocuted, and the victory will be decided."

As she said this...Milk looked at Callaud.

The swordsmen all look over at Callaud as well.

The man nodded,

"Very well. It'll end here. We'll have lunch an hour later, and the next training will be another two hours after that. Milk, don't be late."

There were no compliments at all.

No, there's no need to say what's obvious...

Once there were results, they would move on to the next training.

The next one, next one and next one.

He would continue to aim higher until she became useless.

Milk watched Callaud leave, and wearily collapsed as she sat on the ground.

“.....Yes.”

She answered softly.

Part 5

Soon after,

(Do your best, Milk! It's alright, you can do it! Yes! Don't let out any sounds. Your etiquette must be proper, your mannerisms must be elegant. It's alright, just ignore the bad...ahh...it hurts...but you must do your best!) Milk continued to encourage herself deep inside her heart as she continued to drink the soup.

Her entire body was feeling the pain of being hit by wooden swords and she felt that she couldn't hold the spoon or that she would collapse at any moment...

"Nn...aa"

A slight nudge from her body caused every part of her to be in pain. But even so...

(If I don't eat well now...my body will not be able to take this! Drink up, Milk! Hurry!)

Right now, the place where Milk was undergoing her struggle was the dining table lit by candle light. The Callaud family was gathered around the table.

Milk's foster parents were there, and so were her sisters of similar age.

In stark contrast to Milk, all of them were happily chatting with each other and enjoying the delicious dinner.

One of Milk's sisters, who was older than Milk by a year, said cheerily,

"Mother, Anna-sama invited me to go travelling with her the next time there's school vacation. Is that okay?"

"Eh? Anna-sama, as in the princess of Count Egiluna? Where did she invite you to?"

"She said that we can go to the beaches of Cornel for a while, mother, and

that we can enjoy some seawater bath.”

At this moment, the girl who was of the same age as Milk answered,

“Eh—onee-sama is really sneaky. I want to go to!”

“It can’t be helped. Anna is a good friend of mine, right, Mother? Can I go?”

Her mother looked slightly troubled as she turned her head towards the master at this dining table,

“This child’s father, what do you say? Since Nalua had spoken, we might as well let the whole family go on a trip.”

“Um, that’s right.”

Callaud nodded slightly, and the children cheered.

However, Callaud immediately turned to Milk,

“As for you, you obviously know what to do, right?”

“Eh?”

Milk let out a puzzled sound as she basically didn’t hear any of what was discussed. She could only stop the hand that was fighting with the soup and lifted her head to look around...

“Ah, yes. I understand. I still have military training to go through.”

The moment the battered Milk said that, her sisters looked at her unhappily.

Milk realized this and hurriedly showed a smile,

“Ah, Eimi nee-sama, Nalua-sama. That’s really great. Please enjoy yourselves.”

“U, un.”

And the two girls showed grimmer expressions.

Milk’s foster mother looked at her as if she saw something dirty.

Callaud continued to tuck in silently with a stern expression.

It was a daily meal...

Milk smiled and tried to continue eating as she didn’t want the girls to mind... however,

“Ah...”

Milk moaned,

The pain she endured up till now suddenly struck her body.

Immediately, she instinctively let go of the spoon...

The spoon knocked into the utensils, letting out a loud sound that echoed throughout the entire dining table.

“.....Uu.”

Milk frowned as she held onto her hand,

“So, sorry.”

And spoke.

But Callaud stood up, walked towards Milk and swung his fist.

Milk could only watch silently. The brutal training everyday caused her body's abilities and reflexes to far exceed a normal human's...

However, Milk didn't dodge it. It was pointless to dodge. If she dodged, she would continue to get hit and get chased out of the house. If she got chased out of the house, she would have no place to go to...

She watched the incoming fist flying at her with a forsaken look...

Milk's petite body was hit far out from the chair.

“KYAAHH!?”

Her sisters cried out.

Milk collapsed onto the floor like she was a puppet with her strings cut...

“Kaha...aau...”

Her mouth got cut again as blood flowed out...

Callaud stared down at Milk from behind with an emotionless expression,

“It seems that you still haven't understood the weight of the Callaud family's name. You must be better than anyone else and have an elegance that will not shame the Callaud family. That's why I bought you, because I thought that you

had such a value...”

Milk slowly stood up.

“I, I understand. I’m really sorry.”

She nodded.

Yes, that’s the reason she was here, how she was always taught.

Ever since she was bought over at the age of 5, Milk had always, always lived for such a reason.

Every day, every day, every day, the blood had been coming out from her. No, in a certain sense, she had been going through military training that came with death. Her life was easily dangled. Everything would be over if she died. If she couldn’t live, she wouldn’t be able to enter the army and bear the name of the Callaud family...

Every single day passed on like this.

She was loved by no one, not noticed by anyone...

But one day, she finally realized this.

The promise she made in the past, her dreams were all unable to be fulfilled. She finally realized this.

She despaired.

She had nothing left.

The meaning of her survival, her hope was all gone.

But she never gave up, never willing to die.

She couldn’t lose here.

She promised the boy.

She promised him that she would do her best.

That’s why...

She tried her best to let everyone else see her smile.

So as not to shame the Callaud’s name.

So as not to let that boy laugh at her.

Using her bloodied face—

Elegantly.

Part 6

The young men's calls,

The exploding sounds of magic,

It's the practice field of the Roland Empire's Officer Academy.

This was the place where noble children who wanted to enter the army were gathered, an Officer academy for the elites.

Sion watched the young students train from the monitoring room that had a large window. He watched them train for a while, and then looked at the thick stack of information in his hands.

This was the investigated report Fiole compiled detailing the names of all the talented people.

The report included all sorts of details of each person, abilities, character, whether they were of nobility, whether they would serve Sion...

In other words...

They were not children of nobility, but children bought by nobles, and these children hated the nobles...also, there were also records of how the children were raised in the noble's family...Sion looked at this report.

"Ahh~ really, Fiole left on his own while leaving such a thick document..."

He grumbled sadly.

Recently, Sion had been coming over to the Officer Academy to pick out outstanding talents based on this report to solidify his position. Fiole was supposed to be the one doing this...

But now that Fiole was no longer around...

And—Claugh, who was behind, was acting as the guard,

“And, who’s the one that caught your eyes today?”

Sion moved his eyes away from the information and smiled,

“I specially chose a girl for your sake today, Claugh.”

Claugh’s expression immediately went from uninterested to sparkling.

“Oh, really? I already had a feeling when I got up from bed this morning that I shouldn’t request Calne to escort you today, Sion...it felt like fate.”

Sion gave a slightly wry look on his face as he lifted his head to look at his subordinate who was older than him.

“You already felt that this is fate although you haven’t even met that girl?”

“Fufufu, don’t look at me this way, Sion. I can feel fate from all the girls in the world.”

“Hoh, that’s impressive.”

Sion shrugged and lifted his hands.

Claugh suddenly showed a reliable attitude.

“It’s really my honor that you would praise me like this, Your Majesty...just joking. What kind of talent is she?”

Sion nodded,

“Un, very outstanding.”

He looked at the information.

The person he spotted had outstanding grades, and one could tell from the skill in magic constructing, theory, combat skills and all sorts of battle skills that she had quite the high aptitude.

But these weren’t the amazing points that caught his attention, but the girls grades in the subject...

Outstanding grades in tactics and strategy.

And when there were mock battles, the squads she commanded had never lost before...

This result was really shocking.

But it's different from working hard and raising ability in spells and combat skills. This required a certain sort of talent.

Opportunity and popularity.

Opportunity would refer to digesting whatever tactic or strategy one learnt and use it to deal with all sorts of situations or create a brand new tactic when necessary.

And popularity—

This was the hardest part. How much the subordinates believe in oneself when one lead the army could cause the battle strength to increase.

Anyway, this report showed that this person had outstanding ability that was higher than many others.

And all at a very young 16 years of age.

This was already enough for Sion to qualify her as a talent he wanted...

However—what Sion was noticing this time wasn't these abilities of hers...

"Never mind. You'll know when you see it."

As he said this, Sion handed the information over to Claugh. He received it...

And suddenly showed an enthusiastic expression.

"Nn...aah? What's this? The daughter of that famed Callaud family...I'm not looking forward to it then. Besides, she's most definitely some haughty noble family's child or something...why do you want such a person as your ally?"

Sion smiled.

"What now? Weren't you always trying to talk up some noble girls? Now you don't want nobles as your allies?"

"This and that are two different issues altogether. As for me..."

Claugh's voice went deeper as his expression was completely different from the usual frivolous look, regaining the usual sharp expression he had.

"I'm really infuriated by what happened to Fiole. I really can't forgive those nobles who never thought of the pain people had and played those dirty tricks. I

don't want those noble children who become our allies to backstab us."

"...I agree."

Sion nodded.

"But Claugh, not all nobles are enemies. There are some amongst the nobles who are very unhappy about the current situation, and there are people who understand the people other people have."

"You're right there..."

"Right now, the people I want to recruit are all chosen by Fiole. I trust in his vision, and this kid I want to see was bought by a noble."

Claugh's eyebrows tensed up as he frowned...

"Ahh I see...but, buying people...huh? Sounds really disgusting. I really can't get along with nobles."

"I feel the same."

Claugh's expression immediately brightened up the moment he heard this,

"Of course, I'll take over this 16 year old girl who's been played by the nobles!!"

"O, oi oi...that won't do. This kid this time has been already reserved."

"Haa? Reserved? What does that mean?"

Sion chuckled confidently.

This was the real reason why she was chosen...

The information regarding her was researched on down to every specific detail. Amongst the information, there was the name of the Roland Special Institute number 307.

Roland Special Institute number 307.

One of the darkest secrets in the history of the Roland Empire.

That place was most suited to the term 'Hell'.

On the surface, it looked like a kind facility that housed orphans who lost their

parents in the long wars and nurtured them to survive...

But in fact, that wasn't the case. Talented orphans were gathered here and ingrained with thorough military training. Once a child was deemed to be of low aptitude, the child would be immediately executed. The remaining few children who could survive would either be bought by the nobles for high prices or sent into war at a very young age...

She was one of the few survivors.

And also, part of 'his' past...

At this moment—

The door to the room was knocked on.

"I'm Milk Callaud."

A cute voice,

Sion and Claugh glanced at each other.

"Come in."

Sion said.

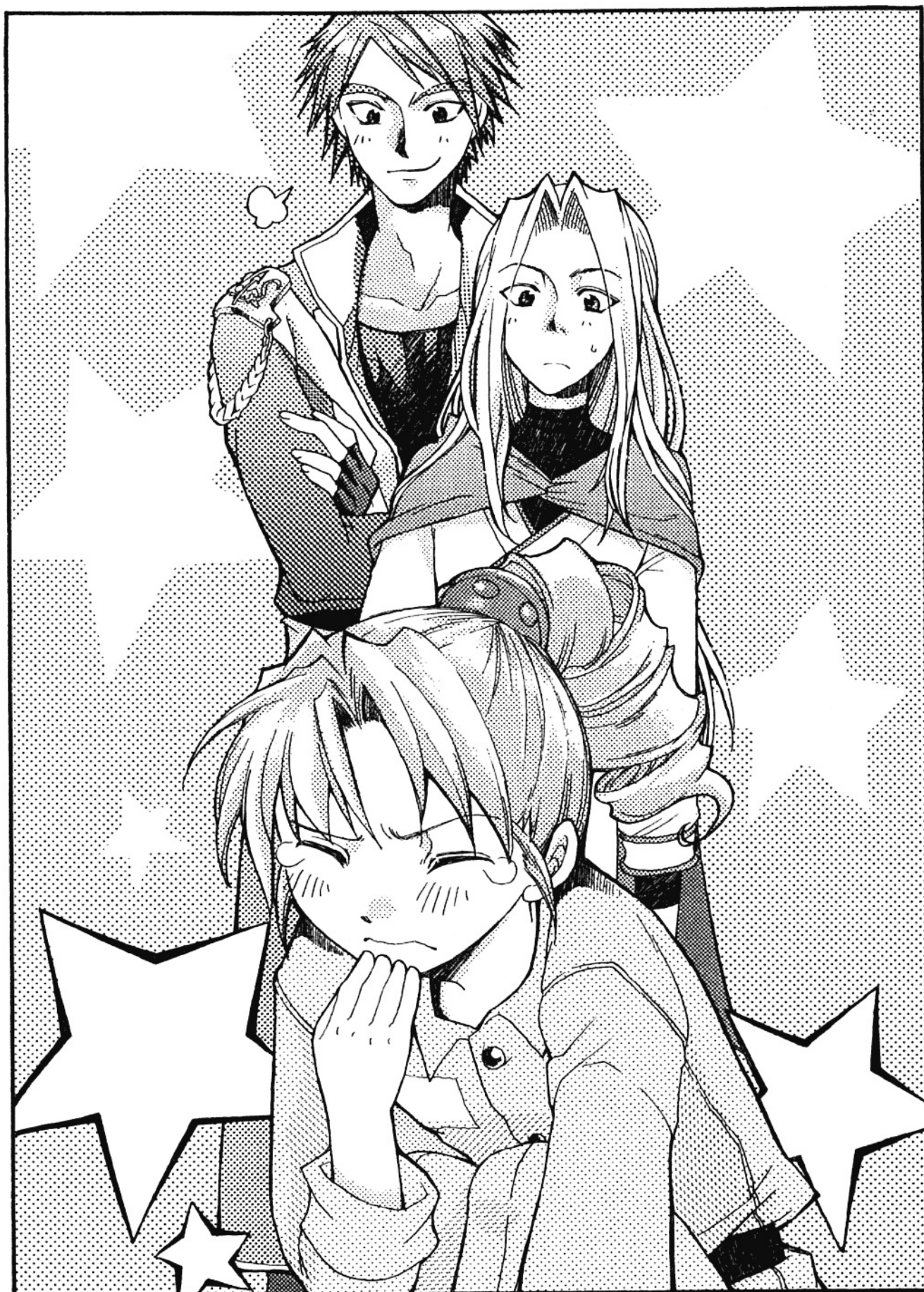
The moment he finished, the petite body immediately moved, and the beautiful—or rather, cute girl walked in, remaining still in front of Sion's group, looking really nervous...

"Yo, your majesty, I heard that you're looking for...OUCH!"

The more she spoke, the more unclear she seemed to be. She suddenly bent down...

And, using her cute voice,

"...I bit my tongue...it hurts...uu...but but, I can't back away here! Do your best, Milk! Okay, try it again, eieio~!"



She muttered to herself...

Sion's group looked at Milk speechlessly...

Milk, who lifted her face again, showed tears as her face was flushed red,

"...We, well, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Erm, erm, that...I heard that Your Majesty was looking for me, right? I heard that you wanted me to take some form of test?"

She stared at Sion's group with her round and large innocent eyes, and finally managed to say out what she wanted to say clearly.

There was no sense of the uneasiness the nobles would have in her eyes,

Or rather, the impression she gave was just like some kindergarten kid who wasn't just all dirty...

Seeing Milk like this, Sion and Claugh couldn't help but look at each other—

Claugh's expression was painfully trying to endure his laughter as he whispered beside Sion,

"I say, Sion, are you really going to use this person? This is really funny. I like such an interesting Missy."

Sion chuckled as well as he pretended to cough a few times and looked at Milk.

The cute face, the extremely large round eyes, the flaxen-colored ponytail, the petite body,

She really looked...unreliable...

It was really impossible to tell that she was someone who had outstanding grades and was undefeated when she lead her forces in tactics and strategy lessons...

Even if she was once 'his'...

"..."

Sion stared at Milk, who had been standing still nervously for a while, and then gave a look to Claugh. Claugh nodded...and his hand suddenly moved

quickly.

Immediately, he threw out a pen from his hand right at Milk.

That pen flew straight at Milk's immature-looking face...

Milk's eyes continued to stare at Sion as she didn't seem to notice the pen at all.

It'll hit. Sion thought.

That report was just baseless after all...

However—

Milk raised her hand towards the pen without even looking at it.

However, Milk's hand actually grabbed onto the pen...

And then, she looked at the pen she grabbed onto for the first time...

And suddenly panicked.

"Aa? Ho, how did you know that I forgot to bring my pencil case? Well...I'm sorry. I won't make the same mistake again...then, can you lend me this pen? Where do I take the test?"

She continued to talk, and didn't seem to realize that catching the pen was something really amazing...Claugh really looked happy.

"This kid is the real deal."

"But, well...looking at her like this, it's really hard to imagine her having some leadership ability..."

Sion looked at Milk again seriously.

She tilted her head and looked over, and she really looked like a pet everyone loved...Sion smiled wryly and whispered, "She doesn't look like a reliable kid on first glance...will the subordinates follow her? What do you think, Clough?"

Claugh smiled,

"You really don't understand, Sion. It's because she looks unreliable that her subordinates would fight hard, you know? Especially when the leader's a girl."

"Heh~...is that so?"

“That’s how it is. However, you might want to assign her a squad first. That’ll show it.”

“How domineering you are. How about she become your superior?”

“AH!? Wa, wait, why must she be my superior!?”

“Nn? Not happy about it?”

“No...I can’t say I’m unhappy...”

Clough looked at Milk. “To put it, well, I prefer women who are slightly more mature, but not old women like those Calne likes. Or rather, to describe them, those who are normally very reserved, but at night...”

Sion watched Clough describe his ideal woman so passionately to himself and sighed long and hard,

“Okay okay, I got it. But I never thought of letting her work with you in the first place. I’ve already decided where she would go.”

“Hou? Where?”

Clough asked in a rather interested manner. Sion chuckled mischievously and called out Milk, who was giving them an incredulous look while they had their conversation.

“Milk Callaud.”

“Ye, yes!”

The moment she was called up, Milk’s face tensed up again.

And then, Sion glanced at her,

“From now forth, you are promoted to lieutenant.”

“.....Heh? Wait, EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEHHHHHHHHHHH!!!?”

Milk raised her voice in disbelief as her eyes widened,

“Er, Erm...I haven’t even graduated from Officer Academy yet? And...let alone a Second Lieutenant, being promoted to lieutenant in one go is...”

Sion smiled,

“I feel that this rank is rather suitable for you given your grades.”

“Really...but...”

“Are you unhappy?”

“No, I have no intention of that at all? But more than that, there should be someone else more suitable than me! It’s a little too much for me to be a lieutenant before those graduates with outstanding grades...”

Seeing that Milk was being quite polite, Sion and Claugh grimaced. Normally, people wouldn’t say such a thing.

Even with such a good chance of promotion dropped right in front of her, one would normally gobble it up.

But Milk was really hesitating...

Is that...a rebellion against the nobles who bought me? If I become outstanding in the army, will it go as what the Callaud family wants, or am I going against it...?

Sion glared sharply at Milk,

“What are you hesitating about? Is the rank of lieutenant too much of a responsibility to you? Is this going against the Callaud family?”

“Eh?”

On hearing that, Milk looked at Sion seriously and pondered deeply,

“...Your Majesty, do you already know about it?”

“Yeah. My subordinates are all very outstanding. I have all sorts of information about you ever since you were born. Even about Roland Special Institute Number 307...”

The moment Sion said this, Milk’s body jerked, but he continued,

“What do you intend to do? What are you hesitating about? Do you hate to serve me?”

On hearing this question, Milk could only lower her head as she seemed to be thinking about something...and remained silent as if she recalled something...

“I...don’t hate the Callauds. They were deadly strict...but they raised me up...I feel I should repay them if I can. My foster parents don’t like me...but Eimi nee-

sama and Nalua-sama are very kind...

And about the Roland Special Institute Number 307 incident...I don't hate it at all.

That's because over there, I..."

Sion's group couldn't hear the voice after that—

But Sion could imagine it,

As for why, that's because 'he' was there...

And—

Milk lifted her head and showed a strong expression unlike before,

And also had a trace of elegance in her smile.

"I understand. I'll gladly accept this rank."

Sion was very satisfied with this answer,

"Then, Lieutenant Milk Callaud, you may report this to the Callaud family. I will inform you of where you will be assigned later on. In the meantime, rest well at home."

"Yes! Thank you very much!"

Milk lowered her head and walked out of the room.

Sion and Claugh watched the door close—

Claugh said,

"Such a good kid...I want a daughter like her."

"Nn? Then you have considered settling down already, right? You can have as many partners as you want, Claugh."

"I'LL DEFINITELY BE KILLED IF THAT HAPPENS!"

"Of course, because you've been dating with quite a number of them every single time."

"I'm one with a fair heart."

"And you dare to say that."

“Leaving that aside, that kid...she’s called Milk, right? Where do you intend to send her to?”

Sion simply answered,

“The ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad.”

Claugh couldn’t help but widen his eyes,

“Ahh? Why must you send her to such a place...”

It’s to be expected why he would be so shocked.

The ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad.

That was one of the most hated squads.

They were to capture or kill the ‘Taboo Breakers’ who had escaped the country on their own—their past comrades. The squad that was in charge of such a mission would be one of the toughest ones in this era without a war.

Also, they would be working in other lands, dangerous when considering that they wouldn’t have the assistance of the Roland Empire. Also, they would have those who were called ‘Taboo Breakers’ as opponents, those who learned the powerful magics of the Roland Empire.

Also...

The squad that often partook in death...the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad was often looked down on by the other squads, and derogatorily called ‘Ally Killers’...

That was why the children of nobles would definitely never be assigned to that place.

Those gathered over there were orphans who had ability but had no one to rely on...

That was why Clough was shocked,

“Sion, what are you thinking?”

Sion shrugged his shoulders.

“Fufu. It’s a secret. Anyway, I’ll hand her over to Miller and Luke.”

Now Claugh was even more surprised...

“Luke? Wait...why is he still in the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad? Why? Didn’t you pull him out during the revolution?”

“Haha. About him, it seemed that he wanted to work under Miller, and had no interest in being outstanding.”

“No, even so...Miller-sempai can be even more outstanding as well...”

“Same goes for Miller as well. He didn’t want anyone else to do the job of the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad that handles the lives of people. Even when I offered him the position of Lieutenant General, he refused it. He said that he would keep the rank of Major so that it would be easier for him to do many things.”

“...”

On hearing that, Claugh gave a frustrated look,

“I, Is that guy an idiot? Staying in that hated department...”

Sion chuckled happily,

“It’s because such a guy is around that this country can remain safe. Besides, there’s a king like me around too.”

“I see.”

“DON’T JUST AGREE LIKE THAT!”

Sion argued against Claugh, and then closed up the information in his hands,

“Alright, our work is done for today. Let’s go.”

“Alright.”

Both of them intended to walk out of the room,

And at this moment,

Sion and Claugh felt an overwhelming killing intent from outside the room...

That killing intent rushed into through the door without restraint.

Claugh immediately got into position to protect Sion,

“What was that!?”

“I don’t know...but...”

Sion stared at the door sharply.

It was undoubtedly something dangerous,

And there wasn’t just one person there.

There were many...

Claugh groaned,

“Have the nobles decided to kill you without caring about their own image, Sion...?”

And—

The door slowly opened.

They saw—

A man standing there. Unexpectedly, there was no one else there.

Sion stared at this man in a mystified manner.

He had nice long black hair, about the same height as Clough, but a lot skinnier than him.

Also, he had a very beautiful looking face...but not a lot of people could realize that. That was because of the icy cold green eyes in the center of the face...the icy cold eyes that seemed to look down on everyone were scattered a dark presence...

He was slightly older than Sion, and looked to be about 22, 23 years old.

Claugh couldn’t help but grumble,

“Who is this guy...?”

And stared back at him with the contrasting crimson red eyes that were filled with life.

The man played dumb as he raised his hands,

“I seemed to have shocked you people, Major General Clough, and Your

Majesty.”

He walked into the room with slow steps and then stood in front of Sion’s group. He touched his chest with the mysterious black ring on the finger and cautiously lowered his head, “I’m Miran Froaude, son of the Marquis Karlal Froaude, and I currently have the rank of the Lieutenant Colonel in the Roland Imperial Army.”

On hearing this introduction, Claugh looked really unhappy.

“Oh, the son of such a great noble. What are you doing here?”

Froaude lifted his head slightly,

“No, I heard that His Majesty came here to gather people to fight against the nobles who would escape from time to time.”

“WHAT!? YOU!!”

Claugh roared, however,

“Back down, Claugh.”

Sion stopped him and faced Froaude, staring at him with the golden icy stare that looked like it could freeze anyone.

“Lieutenant Colonel Miran Froaude. I know of you. A talented man who became a lieutenant at a very young age of 17, and carried out several suppressing works during the civil war several times and quickly rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Even though you’re the son of Marquis Karlal Froaude...in fact, you were bought. You were an orphan yourself, am I right?”

And then, on hearing Sion’s words, Frouade showed a slight smile on his face.

“As expected of you, Sion Astal-sama. Shouldn’t you have added— ‘you would do anything and everything to complete the mission, even if it means carrying out despicable means. Loyal to Marquis Froaude, but has difficulty working with allies’—the report of the deceased Fiole Folkal should have something like this, am I right?”

Frouade said these words without any restraint.

Sion was the only one who should have the report Fiole Folkal left behind,

and nobody else should be able to access it...

But Sion merely remained silent about this.

“And then, what do you want from me?”

Froaude glanced at Claugh, and then back at Sion,

“...If possible...”

He merely said this.

Sion’s face showed a slight smile as he nodded gently.

“Sure. Oi Claugh. Do you mind going out for a while? It seemed that Lieutenant Colonel Miran Froaude doesn’t want anyone other than me to hear what he has to say.”

Claugh panicked.

“Oi oi oi oi, hold it there, Sion. That won’t do. I came here to protect you. Besides, you don’t want me to know what this guy has to say?”

On hearing that, Sion smiled wryly,

“No, it’s not that I can’t let you hear it, but that this Lieutenant Colonel here won’t speak up if you are here. However, I want all kinds of information here. You know my personality.”

Claugh clutched his head and answered reluctantly,

“...Ahh, I got it...so that means, since you decided on this, my suggestion will definitely not reach you...really, if Calne knows about this, he’ll nag me again and say something like this sempai is useless or something.”

“Haha. Well there’s always a way when it comes.”

“Nn. However...”

Claugh lifted his head to stare at Froaude...

“Be careful.”

“Ahh.”

Sion nodded, and Claugh left the room unwillingly. Sion watched him leave, and turned to look at Froaude.

“And then? Let me ask this again? What do you want from me?”

Froaude stared right at Sion and immediately went straight to the topic at hand.

“About this...I suppose you should understand? I came here to visit you because you definitely need me.”

“Un? I don’t understand what are you talking about here...”

But Froaude interrupted Sion’s words,

“You should have realized this. Major General Claugh Klom is a radiant person as his appearance indicates. Fiole Folkal’s the same as well, and the same goes for that Milk Callaud. You, who are always walking on the stage, will always gather people who are chasing after the light. But these aren’t enough for what you really desire, am I right?

Or rather, you will bear the darkness alone? That’s impossible. You had been able to do so up till now, but now you're the king, the man radiating light in this country. Then, someone will definitely have to replace you and bear the darkness. I want to be that person. I want to get that thing you really want.”

Froaude said with an attitude that seemed to indicate that he had read Sion’s inner heart, and looked at him,

“...Bear my darkness, huh? That’s quite an arrogant tone. Then, do you know what I want?”

And then,

“Of course I do. It exists inside you.”

Froaude’s expression didn’t show any changes at all as he answered without hesitation.

“Hou?”

Sion answered happily with a smile.

“Then, try and say it out then.”

Froaude took a short breath, closed his eyes, and simply answered,

“Yes...right now, this Roland Empire is just a country in the Menoris

Continent...but I want to help you fulfill your wish to conquer the entire continent and become the king of the Great Roland Empire.”

Sion frowned.

“.....So, do you think that’s my dream? Haha, that’s really an amazing dream. But I haven’t thought of things to such a grand level, you know? What I want is just a country without war, one where the people can smile and live.”

But Froaude’s face showed a satisfied and icy cold smile, and lowered his head respectfully,

“Of course, Your Majesty. No matter what you think, a king has to say things like that. And then, I’ll handle the remaining darkness. For this sake, I am already prepared to abandon my foster parents without hesitation.”

Sion watched Froaude lower his head and swear his loyalty.

Froaude then spoke again,

“Please allow me to be with you.”

“ ...”

A really enigmatic man.

Sion thought that this man had icy eyes and a cold heart.

This man didn’t care about what was said just now at all.

To conquer the Menoris Continent, to become the king of the Great Roland Empire, that was what he wanted to make Sion into.

Even if this would cause this Menoris Continent to be involved in a large war, he would not hesitate over it...

This man thought that this was Sion’s dream...

Saying that I hope for this...

I...

Sion narrowed his eyes. It’s true that Lucile himself had said it of his once before.

What I really want is to be the King of Roland, and what happens after that...

However, the moment he thought of this, Sion shook it off deep inside his heart. *This is stupid. What I wish is what my mother wished for me, what Kiefer wished, what everyone wished, what he wished...*

An ordinary peaceful world without war.

Sion again looked at Froaude.

“What you’re saying is really weird, Miran Froaude. Do you intend to kill your foster father first?”

Froaude lifted his head, and for an instant, showed a shock,

“Ha, haha, if that’s what you wish...”

He showed a heinous smile that was like a dead person's.

A deep darkness.

Sion started to ponder.

This man is dangerous'.'

However, he was a necessary talent as well. He had a calm mind, and was a talent who could do what he, Claugh, Fiole and the rest couldn’t do.

This man had the same smell as Lucile. No, he wasn’t of a monstrous level like Lucile who looked protected by the spirits...however, it felt that there was a more human darkness from him compared to Lucile...

Can I control him?

Sion pondered...but immediately laughed at himself for being so weak.

“.....Alright. I’ll let you work under me.”

Froaude lowered his head again.

“I'm extremely grateful.”

Part 7

Several days later, Froaude was promoted to Colonel, and was transferred to work under Sion.

His work was disgustingly perfect.

He took on the undercover role alone, which Sion had never given Fiole before, and completed them all perfectly one after another.

Right now, Sion is reading through one of the documents Fiole left behind—the Cleado village leaders not collecting taxes because of their conflict with the nobles. He used his icy cold expression that didn't show any thought as he read the compilation report of the leaders.

“Let's leave this aside for now.”

Sion lifted his head up from the table,

“But this problem is because of the high taxes charged in Cleado village, right? I can't just ignore the pain of the people...”

However, Froaude didn't even glance at Sion,

“Your Majesty, as compared to the people who have a weak voice, we should first focus on the nobles. Right now, your verbal authority amongst the nobles isn't very strong, Astal-sama. Besides, Cleado Village is under the jurisdiction of that Count Stearead's group, and unfortunately, we don't have the power to fight them. Right now, we can only use the leaders of Cleado village as a seed of dissatisfaction against the anti-king faction. I feel that's the best strategy.”

Yes, Froaude said it. I'll harvest the people in pain...

Sion's face frowned slightly.

“Even if this is the best strategy, I can't do it. I'll be just like the old king...”

But Froaude interrupted his words,

“Then please hurry and control the country in your hands. Do you intend to use your false kindness as priority to let the people in the country sink into crisis...or will you endure for now and walk down your rule...?”

“ ... ”

Froaude’s words were right. If he continued to take on the anti-king nobles, the ones who would be most hurt would be the people in this country.

Froaude’s strategy was a way to weaken the authority of these nobles and increase Sion’s power. It was necessary...

However...

“That won’t do. Send the people at Hillread to assist.” Froaude seemed to look disappointed as he narrowed his eyes and watched Sion, “Assist...is it?”

But Sion laughed coldly,

“Yes, assist, but not in my name. Yes, use a merchant’s name or something else to help them. Of course—”

Froaude showed an understanding look,

“I see. Spread rumors that the merchant’s a believer of Your Majesty and extend help to show his appreciation for you...okay, I’ll do so this time. But we can’t use such a strategy all the time...”

“...Yes I understand. I understand....so I’ll leave the rest to you.”

“...I understand.”

Once he finished, Froaude retreated from the room. Claugh and Calne walked by him and entered the office.

Claugh looked back at Froaude, who was leaving the room, and walked towards Sion,

“So you made that guy one of our allies?”

He gave a very frustrated look, but in turn Sion smiled,

“Yeah, he’s very outstanding. He really helped out a lot just now.”

Calne looked at Sion and Claugh, and then turned to look at Froaude as he left the room,

“Eh? I say, who are you talking about? Are you talking about that new guy?”

Claugh nodded,

“He was someone Sion scouted and pulled over to our side when I was guarding Sion in your state?”

“Heh? Scou...? Eh? Eh? But sempai, didn’t you say that there was only a cute girl you guys were aiming for as a talented person?”

“Ahn? Don’t always worry about the specifics. My policy is not to talk about guy things normally.”

“What kind of principle is that...if that’s the case, I can’t let you carry out the mission next time, Claugh-sempai.”

“Hou...since when are you so great that I can let you take over? Have you mistaken it for those jobs I entrusted you?”

“What are you saying? You didn’t hand over the jobs to me, but forced them onto me. All the troublesome jobs were thrown at me...ahh really, forget about that...speaking of which, who’s that guy? The new guy...”

Sion answered,

“Froaude. Miran Froaude.”

Claugh frowned,

“An annoying guy...I say, Sion. I guess he isn’t thinking for your sake...it’s not just that I’m saying that he’s hard to handle, but also...that guy’s eyes are really unnerving...it’s like they’re frozen, irritating eyes...he’s definitely someone different from us.”

Calne tilted his head,

“It’s rare for you to hate someone so much, sempai.”

“Really? My principle is that I hate all men.”

“Well, I like women too...but that’s not what I mean...”

Sion gave a wry smile as he watched the two of them,

“Froaude is the son of a noble, Calne.”

“Ahh, sempai hates nobles but still goes out with noble girls...”

Calne grumbled, but Claugh ignored his grumbling and looked at Sion,

“I think you won’t be changing your decision now. Do you think that by recruiting him as an ally, you can control him?”

Claugh looked rather serious as he stared at Sion with serious eyes as if they’re taking on Sion’s thoughts directly, contrasting starkly from Froaude, and Sion took this expression seriously.

“Someone able to control a person like him is what a king has to be.”

“...”

Claugh smiled.

“Okay, if that’s what you decided.”

Calne added on,

“Of course, Sion is different from sempai. Up till now, he has never made a mistake when it comes to making decisions.”

“Ahh? Do you mean that I’ve made mistakes in my decisions before?”

“Haa? Why must I apologize to you because of things regarding women, sempai?”

“YOU BRAT! YOU WANT TO FIGHT HERE!?”

“Impossible, I’ve never seen anyone who could beat you in a fight, sempai. But if we’re playing cards like usual, whoever loses will have to treat, you know?”

“Oh, you have guts there. I’m different from usual today.”

“That’s what you say all the time, sempai.”

“Shut up! I’ll take revenge for this!”

“You wouldn’t pay every time you lost anyway...never mind, let’s go again.”

And then, Claugh threw the file at Sion with momentum,

“And that’s why this guy would treat me to lunch. I’ll be going off then. Ah, that’s right. Here’s the report from the last investigation mission.”

As he said that, Claugh walked out of the room carefreely. Calne also put down his document.

“I’ll hand in my report...”

“Oi, Calne! Hurry up!”

“Ah, ah, then Sion-san, I’m going off then.”

And, as he watched the two of them leave the room...

“I say, you better work hard...”

Sion sighed long and hard.

Part 8

On the other hand, after the two of them left the room...

"Then, sempai, what are we playing today? Poker? Clock? Fist?"

"..."

But Claugh didn't answer, and Calne tilted his head,

"I say, sempai?"

"Ahh?"

"We're not playing cards?"

"How can I be playing cards when we're working?"

"!?"

Immediately, Calne showed the horrified look of a kid who seemed to have seen some shocking development and took two, three steps back...

"Se, se, se, se, sempai, you're saying something proper for once!?"

"...What kind of person do you think I am? But that doesn't matter. More than this, about Froaude?"

"Froaude? That new guy? You're that mindful about him?"

Claugh's expression was really serious.

"Ahh, I just have a feeling that that guy is going to be troublesome."

"Ge, sempai's using his own instincts again. This is bad, your instincts are often sharp, sempai, just like a beast..."

"Not just instinct. You'll understand one day...anyway, what's our mission?"

"Ah? Mission...? Ah, to protect Sion, right?"

"Yes. I feel that this country finally got saved because Sion became the king of

this country.”

“I’m the same as well. If it’s Sion, he can definitely lead this country to a positive direction, which is why we followed him.”

“He’s different from us. This country needs him, so, protecting that guy...”

“Is our job.”

Calne showed a serious expression as well.

“And then, we’re going to investigate Frouade’s background...”

Claugh chuckled, and Calne grabbed his blond hair so much it got messy,

“Really, what a troublesome king...”

“...To me, I think you’re the one who’s more troublesome, sempai...we’ve already agreed...”

Both of them continued as they walked down the long corridor,

On the way, they went past Frouade, but never greeted him.



Chapter 3: The Melancholy of the King

Part 1

The house Toale led them to was a rather large one.

Recently, Ryner has been researching hard in a room in this house.

“Heh~ so there’s such a heroic legend here...but it sounds like a bluff or something...if my memory serves me right, this legend seems like it can be heard in all countries...”

Ryner muttered to himself and flipped through one book after another to browse, as he wrote words into his report.

The room that was lent to Ryner was meaninglessly large, but there was a table and a bed, and it was a good place to do research.

He used the ample space in the room efficiently—in other words, since it was given, it would be a waste not to use it—and ended up filling the room with large piles of books, so much that they were piled up to Ryner’s location at the desk beside the door. This place was already at the level of a maze.

At this moment—

The kids’ voices could be heard from outside.

“Ryner nii-chan! It’s time to eat!! The food will get cold if you don’t come down!”

However,

“...”

Ryner didn’t respond,

“Ah, I see. So this legend was derived from this fable...that means, over here...”

“OII, ONII-CHAN!!”

“We’ll eat it if you don’t want to eat!”

“Can we, can we?”

The kids’ voices rang out.

There were 15 kids in this house...the youngest was one year old, and the oldest was Toale at 19...

To think that the man could give birth to so many kids...

That was why Ryner already felt that the kids were too loud right at the beginning, to such an extent that he couldn’t do his research properly...

“OIII, ARE YOU LISTENING!? RYNER NII-CHAN! I SAID IT’S TIME TO EAT!!”

“...Fmmm. Then, the god of the religion over here includes the religion there... in other words, it means that there won’t be too many results even if we checked this place...”

It’s been the 4th day Ryner has been inside this house, and he started to learn how to get used to the kids’ loud voices and filtered them out automatically.

“I’M ANGRY! IF YOU’RE NOT GOING TO HAVE DINNER, THERE WILL BE MONSTERS COMING OUT TO GET YOU TONIGHT! THAT’S WHAT TOALE NII-CHAN SAID! DON’T YOU EVEN KNOW ABOUT THAT!?”

“THAT’S RIGHT, THAT’S RIGHT!”

The kids left these words behind and walked away from the door to this room.

Ryner lifted his head and sighed...

“If I go out there now, I’ll be messed around with by them for the entire day...”

On the first day when he came to this house, the kids were all clamoring over, and he was forced to play hide and seek and ghost hunter with them. He wanted to rest and take a next nap, but Ferris started hitting him and forced him to work properly...and he had to take care of the kids...

It got so bad that he couldn’t even leave this room...

It’s thanks to Toale telling the kids off that they wouldn’t enter this room...

“Really, so they would only listen to Toale...”

Toale’s words were absolute.

To the kids, Toale was their parent, brother, friend and teacher.

And to the kids, Ryner was just an interesting toy...

“Uu...time to get back to work...”

He again turn to look at the book that wasn’t written in the common language, but in an ancient language...

But—at this moment.

The window to the room opened slightly.

For a moment, the curtain swayed slightly even though a slight breeze blew in. But that was for a slight moment as the window closed slightly again as the room became silent again.

It was a change an ordinary person wouldn’t detect...

However, Ryner looked away from the book and turned slowly in that direction...

His body tensed up.

He felt a slight change in this room.

(How troublesome...what in the world entered here?)

The intruder had completely hidden their presence. There wasn’t even a slight sound made while intruding, and obviously the person was not at the level of a mere thief.

This action was trained, and a skill of assassination...

That means, the person who entered just now was an assassin...

That means I might get killed...

That means I have to move to take that person down...

“How troublesome. Besides, I don’t remember being targeted by anyone anyway.”

He continued to face the book without any tension.

And at this moment, suddenly, inside the room,

“Even if you ignore me, I'm still here!”

Unexpectedly, this voice sounded like a young girl's. However, this wouldn't be enough to form a reason, and Ryner understood this well. When he was still a kid in the Roland Special Institute number 307, those with ability, no matter whether they were kids or not, would all be sent into actual combat...

Whether it was assassination or onto the battlefield...

Ryner would never hold back on an opponent that could hide her presence completely.

No matter how unmotivated he seemed, no matter how gentle his expression seemed to be, he was trained in that facility to deal with all sorts of situations...

He sensed that the air inside the room was wavering somewhat, even though there was no sound.

However, he understood that the enemy was attacking.

“Nn.”

Ryner turned around, thinking of checking out the enemy...

“Wha.”

Just when the enemy appeared in his eyes, he was shocked.

A book was flying at him.

“Damn it!”

Ryner clicked his tongue. The wavering in the air just now was just a bait.

He diverted his attention away from the book that flew over, and at this moment, the attack came from another direction, with the presence completely hidden perfectly...



“EHH!!”

“UWAH!?”

As the sound echoed, there was a strong punch let out from behind. Ryner hurriedly dodged it and threw the book that came flying over in the opposite direction straight at the enemy.

Of course, the enemy easily dodged this attack and leapt forward with tremendous impact, stepping onto the wall and using the recoil to attack.

Amazing physical ability.

The enemy was moving around this cramped room, without distinguishing between ceiling and floor and traversing around relentlessly.

Ryner looked at the enemy clearly.

What terrified him was that it was really a girl.

About 7, 8 years old?

For some reason, she was wearing a dress with frills draped all over the side, and her slender back had a red backpack. She had nice blond hair, and though young, was undoubtedly pretty looking.

A beauty...She's not of the age where she could be called that, but she was undoubtedly a pretty girl.

And, inhumanly pretty...

“Erm...”

As he looked at this girl, he suddenly realized that the term he wanted to describe this girl was shockingly similar to a certain person he was already very familiar with.

“This is...”

But right now was not the time to talk.

This pretty girl was swinging her sharp knife wildly.

“Hu, hurry up and die!! The man who took nee-sama away...you definitely become some hated monster at night and do something to nee-sama. That's

what Sion nii-chan said...I, I have to work hard here!!”

“Ah!? I say...beast? Sion? Nee-sama? Hold it right there...”

But the pretty girl ignored Ryner’s words as she continued to launch an attack that would have killed an ordinary person a 100 times over. Ryner continued to try his best to dodge them and at least managed to defend against all of them.

“Ku...looks as if it is a little complicated here...huh?”

He frowned, and at this moment.

The door to the room opened, and a real beauty who was holding a bowl stuffed full of food in one hand walked in,

“Nn. It’s you, Iris. What are you doing here?”

She stared at Ryner and the girl with emotionless eyes.

And—

Suddenly, the girl called Iris stopped her attack on Ryner and leapt up as if she was bounced back.

She kicked the wall, kicked the ceiling again, and leapt over with superhuman speed.

“Nee-samaa!?”

Wanting to hug Ferris.

Ferris used her other hand that wasn’t holding onto the bowl to hold her face, stopping her...

“Nee-samaa~ nee-samaa~”

Iris continued to rub against that hand happily...

This scene looked so intriguing it felt like they either had a good relationship or a bad one...

And Ryner could only look at them blankly...

“Nee-sama? So that means, *that’s* your sister, Ferris?”

Ferris nodded.

“Yes. She’s a beauty like me, right?”

“.....No, well, I can’t actually deny that...”

And so similar to Ferris in that she always brings trouble to others...

He wouldn’t say such a thing even if his mouth was ripped...

“Speaking of which, Ryner, how is the research going? Toale asked me to bring you dinner.”

“I say, can you please ask the question why this troublesome sister of yours is here? Such a young kid being alone...”

But even if he said so, he remembered Iris’ superhuman movements,

“...No, it’s not exactly impossible here in this case...but why is she here?”

Ferris nodded her head in agreement and turned to Iris, who was still rubbing her face against her hand,

“Oi Iris? Why are you here?”

Iris showed a radiant look.

“Iris came here to save nee-sama! Because nee-sama suddenly went off without saying goodbye to me! That’s why I went to a lot of dango shops, but couldn’t find you, nee-sama...after that, Sion nii-chan came over when I was crying and said that nee-sama took a savage beast and went on a trip to find the best dango shop...and then, Iris wanted to make...that...thing called conveying information or something! I’m amazing, right? Right?”

Even though it was hard to understand what she was saying, one could finally understand that she was to be a messenger between Ryner and Sion.

Ferris nodded and patted Iris on the head,

“Nn. That’s impressive. However, you’re still lacking something.”

But Iris was smiling even more now.

“Of course I do! I brought some local stuff for you, nee-sama! Here, Wynnit dango combo sets!”

After saying that, she took out dango boxes from the bag behind her, many,

many...

Iris took out about 5 boxes, and the bag was deflated...

It seemed that the bag had only dango inside...

On seeing this, Ryner started to wonder how the girl arrived here without preparing any necessities for travel...

Even though Ryner's group didn't bring anything here...

But let's leave that aside for now.

On seeing this, Ferris showed a rather satisfied expression,
"100 points."

Iris jumped up happily and turned to Ryner,

"YAY! IRIS GOT 100 POINTS! I'M AMAZING, RIGHT? RIGHT? EHEHEHE♪"

She grinned in a cute manner...

It's really hard to imagine that she's Ferris' sister...

But the moment Ryner thought about it, Iris showed a troubled look,

"Ah! This is bad! Nee-sama taught me that I'll have children if I talk to beasts!!"

"...Oi oi..."

Ferris continued to eat her dango as she directed her words viciously at Ryner,

"Un, to think that you could still remember, Iris. Remember. This foolish-looking man represents the appearance of a beast that will attack women every night."

Iris was shocked,

"Re, represents...? Don't tell me...something happened to you, nee-sama..."

For some reason, Ferris was blushing really hard and looked really anguished,

"...Sorry Iris. I've...already talked to the sex maniac..."

"NNNNNNNOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!"

Ryner just looked at them in an unenthusiastic manner,

“I say.....you two...if you could have kids just like that, this world would be utter chaos...”

But Ryner’s words were interrupted,

“I DEFINITELY CAN’T FORGIVE YOU!!”

“AH!?”

He widened his eyes...

Immediately, Iris’ metallic punch came flying over at an unbelievable speed...

“GYAAAAHHHHH!!!?”

Ryner’s cry of anguish rang through the entire house.

Part 2

Soon after, Ryner, Ferris, and Iris, who wouldn't leave Ferris no matter what, were gathered at the table, eating dango and drinking tea.

Iris took out a memo pad from her bag.

"Then, anyway, tell me what the situation is now! I have to write a report to Sion nii-chan! Come on, say it!"

She was energetically shouting away. Ryner sighed in an unenthusiastic manner, and Ferris was chewing on the umpteenth dango unknowingly, moku moku.

"Okay, hurry up, hurry up!"

"...Haa, seriously, that Sion. Why must he push such a person onto me...HAU!! I, I WAS JOKING...no, well, I'm really happy to be surrounded by such beautiful sisters...so, well, can you please put down that dango stick you're about to throw over...I really can't defend against your attack.....haa..."

Ryner had been sighing quite a lot recently...

Leaving that aside for now.

Ryner looked lethargic,

"Anyway, based on our current situation...ahh...or rather, to be honest, we haven't gotten many results recently. We've been researching in the Royal Library of Nelpha Imperial on the stories of the legends in this place. Something like that. Will this do?"

It's unknown if Iris actually understood or not as she continued to mutter Ryner's words and wrote something in the book.

Ryner was silent for a while,

"....."

Iris was still writing.

“.....”

Iris was still writing...

“...I say, do you need that much time to write the content mentioned just now?”

Ryner was wondering somewhat about what she wrote and peeked at the memo pad in her hand...

There was a weird and bad drawing there...

“I SAY, ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME!!?”

Iris was shocked as she looked at Ryner...

“THAT’S NOT TRUE! I KNOW ABOUT EVERYTHING!”

“Liar.”

“I’M NOT LYING! IT’S TRUE!”

Iris continued to insist in her own words as her hand moved. Ryner just nodded away in response,

“Fine fine, I’m going back to read then. Don’t disturb me. I haven’t had much time to read properly, and there’s not much progress in the research...”

As he said that, he opened the book again. Iris puffed her cheeks and clenched her fists,

“DON’T IGNORE ME!!”

“GGGYYYYYYAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!!!!!”

His anguished cry rang out for umpteenth time...

And soon after...

Ryner described everything about Nelpha ever since he entered this country to Iris.

The reason why he had to explain this vague situation to Iris was that Sion wanted Ryner’s group to not only search for the relics of the legends, but also

move around the countries and obtain information from them before compiling them into a report.

And so, Ryner continued to calmly explain to Iris, who was converting words into an artistry on her memo pad,

"Ahh...it's because of this that we're now living with the son of a prince in this country, Toale's house. This guy is rather decent. If Toale has the heart, he definitely has the ability to start a revolution. He's similar to Sion...ah, but looking at the situation in the city, it seems that the people have more life in them, so a revolution probably wouldn't happen...there doesn't seem to be any wars in this country recently, but looking at the situation now, the current king is still there, sort of a wise king there. But looking at things now, if the current king falls, that stupid prince will become king...

"And the country will change...it's said that a lot of people hate that prince. It seemed that those women he liked would be taken, and he would carry out sexual acts inside the country while acting like no one was looking...

"Looking at things now, if he becomes king, it'll be really bad, right? Besides, that idiot prince is the king's only son...and the nobles will definitely have him as king. They hid the evil deeds of this stupid prince from the king...so it's to be expected that Toale was given lots of expectations.

"Also, there's a rumor that Toale had been reporting the tyrannical acts of several nobles over to the king and solved them—it seemed that he became a window of contact between the king and the people. If there was anything wrong, everyone would look for Toale.

"Of course, Toale got the majority of the people's support...but he wasn't proud of it...

"Well, he's more or less similar to Sion in personality, but he was gentle and responsible, which made him a complete contrast.

"Anyway,

"Sion you bastard!! Handing these two troublesome women over to me!! I'll definitely kill you next time!!"

Just like that.

After saying that, Ryner looked at Iris, and Iris seemed to have finished drawing as she lifted her head.

“Okay! It’s perfect now!”

Ryner glanced at her with his half-closed eyes,

“.....Okay okay.”

“Ah~! What’s with that attitude of yours!? You’re definitely suspecting me there!”

“...Because you’re...just drawing there.”

On hearing Ryner say that, Iris shoved the memo at him,

“Then, just ask away! Iris can answer them all perfectly!”

“...”

Ryner opened the memo pad that was handed over, and was even more lethargic.

All the pages inside the memo pad had dogs, cats and all sorts of animals that were incomprehensible and unnerving. There were two suns, a house with a red roof was shot out with tremendous force from the sea surface...

And the next page showed that the red house hit the sun...

It’s really scary...

It’s like I’m in some sort of a crazy world here...?

Ryner suddenly had this feeling as he hugged his head and groaned.

But the crazy pretty girl looked at Ryner with expectant eyes,

“Hurry hurry!”

And prompted him...

Ryner pointed at the two suns reluctantly,

“Then...what’s this?”

Iris probed her body forward and looked really happy like a kid describing a drawing to her parents.

“This one this big one refers to the king, and the slightly smaller and darker sun refers to that stupid prince! But then, this red house that flew out is Toale, and the sea’s the people! The red house can pierce through the black sun with the people throwing, but the sun’s still very bright now, so there won’t be a revolution for the time being!”

“...Erm...”

On hearing the explanation, Ryner was completely stumped.

And on seeing Ryner’s expression, Iris suddenly lost her self-confidence as she looked at Ryner in a disappointed manner, “...Ah, erm...can’t it do? Has Iris failed?”

Ryner shook his head,

“No, that’s not the issue. It’s really good...so good that I’m a little surprised here...”

Iris’ face lit up again,

“Really? That’s great! Nee-sama, nee-sama!! Iris passed!”

And after saying that, she immediately rushed over to Ferris, who was ignoring the situation here and eating dango, with a force that would definitely kill an ordinary person immediately.

Ferris simply moved aside...and used the momentum to swing her once in the air before grabbing her on one leg to carry her upside down.

“Nn. As expected of my little sister.”

“I love nee-sama the most!!”

And then, she hugged Ferris while upside down.

As he looked at the weird sisters...

“...So I’ve been dragged into such a crazy world...”

Ryner hugged his head and groaned again...

At this moment, there was knocking on the door,

“Erm, Ryner-san. Are you done with your meal yet? If you don’t mind, I’ve

already prepared some red tea and dessert after the meal...”

It was Toale’s voice.

Ryner and Ferris looked at each other.

“This...seems a little troublesome, isn’t it?”

Ryner looked at Iris who was held upside now and whispered.

Iris looked like an ordinary kid no matter what right now...but she was a spy sent over by Sion’s group in Roland, so if Toale spotted her...

“That might be troublesome, yeah.”

Ferris nodded...

And then,

Ferris threw Iris out.

“Eh? EH? Why? Nee-sama!?”

And Iris was rolling in the air.

She continued to ask as she was thrown out of the window just like that...

Ryner just looked at this in a dumbstruck manner.

On a side note, it’s the 3rd floor here, and if she flew out of the window...

She most probably wouldn’t be alright...

But Ferris didn’t look worried at all as she checked that Iris disappeared from the window, took Iris’ memo pad from Ryner’s hands and threw that out of the window before turning around, “Nn. I’ll bring Ryner over, Toale.”

“Okay. I’ll be waiting for you downstairs.”

He went off while leaving those words behind, and Ferris heaved a sigh.

And then, she turned to Ryner,

“Nn. That was a little dangerous just now.”

Ryner looked outside the window wordlessly...

“.....Or rather, for some reason, I’m starting to feel that staying in the same house as you is rather dangerous...”

Ferris nodded hard,

“Um. It’s true that it’s dangerous when a sex maniac like you and a beauty with an angelic pure heart are living together in an enclosed space. I can understand that.”

“.....”

Ryner didn’t even have the strength to argue back...

On a side note, as Ryner was dragged down to the dining room by Ferris, Iris was already playing with the kids from who knew when and enjoying dessert happily...

As she saw Ryner’s group, she waved at them with an innocent smile...

“.....Haa.....I had enough.....”

And Ryner waved back at her weakly...

Part 3

In this pitch black room with only the moonlight outside the window as the light source.

Sion was lying down on the bed he had missed for a long time.

He took off the usual old-fashioned suit and changed into normal plainclothes before looking outside the window.

This was the inside of the Roland palace, a rather high place, and as the city itself was built on elevation, one could see the entire capital of Roland from this window—Reylude.

Sion narrowed his eyes and looked at the capital.

It was already late at night, and there were almost no lights on the streets. However, Sion could still see everything on this street clearly as if it was in the palm of his hand.

The right side area was the slums, and in front of him, the area surrounding the city was where the nobles lived. The outskirts had farmers, and the center had merchants...

And the rest were where ordinary people who were scattered around lived.

Sion...was raised in this city.

Of course, his mother was...

When Sion's mother gave birth to him, she was just a 20 year old girl. Her family wasn't rich, and she was just an ordinary girl, who fell in love like that, who got married normally.

But on one day, she, who caught the eye of the king...had her life changed completely.

Sion once asked his mother.

Whether his mother hated Sion for not being the child of the one she loved, whether she hated that man...the king's son, Sion.

However, she shook her head and said,

"You're a gift bestowed to me by God, Sion, why must I hate? I'm really happy. I have such an outstanding child like you, Sion, so you definitely can't think of anything else."

After saying that, she kissed Sion on the forehead.

And carried the usual smile.

She never let Sion see herself in pain.

She was always saying that she was happy.

No matter how much the nobles bullied her, no matter how much they hated her...

She said that she was happy having Sion with her.

"..."

Sion got up from the bed, walked to the window and took a deep breath of air from outside. The curtain swayed a little.

Sion poked his head outside the table and looked down at the area where the nobles lived.

The nobles...

People who were of higher status than ordinary people...

"How stupid..."

Sion muttered softly,

His mother's status in this city was lower than anyone else...but she was purer than anyone.

At this moment, Sion gave a self-mocking smile.

Yes. Even more than me...

If mom sees the ambitious me using Froaude, Lucile Eris and the rest, what would she say...

Will she still smile and say that I'm her son who makes her proud?

And what about the deceased Fiole? Ryner, Kiefer, Tony, Fualu and Tai...

Sion continued to stand there silently as he looked at the night scene, remembering the names one after another.

But he soon shrugged.

"Since when did I become so timid...I'm thinking too much. I have been burying myself in work recently...Fiole will start throwing tantrums again..."

He said it, and laughed.

He poked his head out of the window, took a deep breath, and closed it.

At this moment.

Suddenly, a large object came flying down from above.

"UWAH!? WHAT!? I SAY, UWAAHHH!!!"

Sion nearly fell out of the window because of this impact.

However...

"Kuu...I can't let myself die here like this!!"

He instinctively jumped up and knocked the thing riding on his back right into the room.

That thing easily spun in the air...

The thing then stood on the bed, raised both hands to make a pose and turned around,'

"Jyan! It's Iris!"

Standing over there was Iris Eris, one of the spies that Sion was making use of...

"How is it? Are you shocked? You were shocked, right? You haven't seen Iris for a long time. Are you happy?"

She asked with a beaming face.

"..."

Sion tried his best to take a deep breath and wanted to recover the heartbeat that felt like it was going to kill him during that fright, and then immediately showed a smile.

“Un. But you’re fast. Have you seen Ryner and Ferris?”

“Un! I saw them already! And Toale’s desserts were really good. Iris raced against Ibel and the rest and got first!”

Sion was already used to Iris jumbling up words in such a vague manner and smiled back kindly, un un,

“Really? You must have quite the fun, is it? Then, what did Ryner’s group say?”

“Un. He said, well, erm...ah, Iris wrote down everything beast-san said.”

After that, Iris took out a memo pad from the bag on her back.

“Here! I wrote them all here.”

And handed it over to Sion.

Sion took it over...

And opened the memo pad.

Immediately!

“.....”

Sion’s mind nearly went to outer space for a moment...

And he finally managed to stop it...

Sion continued to maintain his smile as he started to ask Iris about the meanings behind what she wrote—no, what she drew...

Iris answered happily,

“And then, and then, finally, this cat that looks sleepy is Ryner, and this fox that looks smart here is Sion nii-chan. And then, this sleepy cat is very angry and said that he will kill the fox one day! That’s how it is.”

Basically, it took him more than an hour to finish listening to the explanation

Anyway, once Sion got Ryner's report, he smiled and said,

"Ahaha. So Ryner's still angry at me. Not bad. Guess it's the right decision to pair him with Ferris. He likes to slack, but there's still a need for him to work... however...at this time, I didn't expect them to be in the capital of Nelpha Imperia...

Is this a coincidence? ...Or..."

As he said this, he sank into deep thought.

Eris continued to look around the room for something nice to play with and continued to jump up and down the bed...Sion glanced at her, and narrowed his eyes...

Part 4

The next day.

Around 20 men and women were gathered at the round table in the center of the hall.

They were all close aides to Sion, including Claugh and Calne. Also, there were also a few nobles who followed Sion.

And then—

Calne stood up.

“But it’s still inappropriate this time, Sion...pardon me...Your Majesty. This is obviously a trap set by the anti-king coalition.”

And then, a skinny middle-aged man who had wrinkles on his face and could be aptly described as a gentleman stood up, “Yes. I too feel that your visit to Nelpha Imperia is somewhat inappropriate this time, Your Majesty.”

His tone wasn’t tense or slow, but sturdy.

He was one of the nobles who stood by Sion in the earliest stages.

Count Nuble.

He himself didn’t have much authority, but as he followed Sion, there were more nobles who followed his decision and went under Sion’s authority.

Right now, the nobles here were all recruited by Nuble.

Right now, everyone here was intensely debating about a proposal the powerful nobles, who weren’t here, raised, that Sion—as the new Roland Empire’s king, whether Sion Astal was to visit Nelpha Imperia. Those nobles spoke plainly with a respectable expression, “Right now, the Roland Empire is under your rule immediately due to the revolution you started so beautifully, Astal-sama...however, as the situation change was too drastic, the other

countries, who have been keeping their distance from us are all nervous. So we have to show one thing, and that is that Roland wishes for peace. Thus, if possible, we want to let all the countries see our new king...therefore, we feel that it will be great if Your Majesty visits Nelpha Imperia personally. What do you think?"

The representative of the nobles, Count Stearead knelt down in front of Sion as he said these words.

At that time, Sion had reservations about this proposal...

But for some reason, there were rumors outside that the king of Roland was about to visit Nelpha Imperia. Some of them were praising the king of Roland for risking his life and hoping for peace, and some of them said that this was an important thing, for the new king of Roland to show his authority.

Regarding this, Nuble continued,

"Besides, I've never heard of such a thing before. A country's king visiting other countries without caring about danger; there's nothing more foolish than this. If you're killed, there's no respect to talk about ...besides, it's definitely Count Stearead's group that released this rumor. Please consider this properly once more, Your Majesty.

The nobles present and Sion's own aides all nodded in agreement with his words.

Claugh looked at Sion,

"Everyone said so already. You can tell that this is definitely their trap, so there's no benefit in going there. Just give up."

He said in a frivolous tone,

Nuble stared at him,

"Major General Clough, please take note of your own words when talking to His Majesty...won't this cause a problem? Even if you were a good friend of His Majesty in the past, Astal-sama is the king right now. When you're saying such words, the people below will..."

"Ahh, I got it! It's my fault! Really, such a long-winded uncle. Okay, okay, fine,

Your Majesty the king.”

Sion showed a slight smile on his face and secretly patted Claugh, who didn't show any manners as he sat beside him, on the back.

This seemed to cause Claugh to feel better as he shrugged and pulled himself together.

Nuble nodded his head in a satisfied manner as well,

“Then, Your Majesty, what will happen next? All of us unanimously agree that you shouldn't visit the Nelpha Imperia...”

Everyone present turned to Sion.

On seeing that, Sion wanted to answer...

But suddenly,

“You should go to Nelpha, Your Majesty.”

A cold and sharp voice came from a corner of the round table.

Everyone's stares were directed in the direction the voice came from.

The one who spoke was Froaude. It was like that corner was covered in darkness, as he used the dark cold eyes to look at the people around him.

Nuble spoke,

“What do you mean by that, Colonel Froaude-sama?”

“Simply put, the simple-minded nobles set a dirty trap. Then, the king couldn't show that he could break through the trap easily...oh, pardon me. You lords here are also nobles.”

Claugh, Calne and all the army personnel present were taken aback, and the nobles' eyes flushed red with anger.

“YOU BASTARD! ARE YOU HUMILIATING US HERE!!?”

“AREN'T YOU A NEW ALLY!? BE CAREFUL IN YOUR WORDS!!”

Nuble then stared at Froaude,

“Even so, aren't you of nobility too?”

And mocked Froaude.

But Froaude's expression didn't change at all as he stood up,

"That was disrespectful on my part. I might have gone a little overboard there."

After saying that, he lowered his head slightly, and then looked at the nobles who were present,

"However, I hope that all of you may understand what I'm about to say. What I'm referring to are the nobles who insist on protecting themselves and are riddled with greed. Unfortunately, there are quite the, rare, number of nobles like you who worry about the country...am I right? Your Majesty?"

On being asked, Sion could only nod his head with a wry smile.

And then, some of the nobles present felt embarrassed, and some of them grinned in a satisfied manner...

Froaude checked out the situation, and then continued,

"Anyway, His Majesty's reign has just started. We can't let them see that we're scared. Besides, this time...it's obviously a trap set by the aristocratic nobles...so there's definitely a way to respond to this. If we're successful, we can even take down the nobles who are against the king in one swoop...if that's the case, the name of Count Stearead, who had been looking down on you, will be taken out as well. You will be the ones supporting this country."

On hearing that, the expression of all the nobles present changed.

"I see."

"So there's such a way to think about this as well..."

One by one, each of them changed their view and sank into deep thought...

He effectively used the name of Count Stearead, who was standing at the top of the nobles that were suppressing the king's side and the nobles in Nuble's group.

Froaude skillfully angered the nobles to attract their attention and then pacified them to praise them before baiting them into agreeing with his view...

But at this moment, Claugh spoke up. He showed a disgusted look that was obviously directed at Froaude,

“Fuun. Talk is cheap. And then? What if Sion gets killed once he parades around in Nelpha? We’re doomed then.”

But this time, Froaude turned to look at Claugh,

“Major General Claugh, have you considered the reason the anti-king coalition want His Majesty to head to Nelpha?”

“Ah? I say, it’s to kill Sion.”

“Yes. Then why won’t they take action inside the country, but outside? The anti-king coalition is comprised of Roland nobles, so their authority would definitely be strongest inside the country. Wouldn’t it be easier for them to take action inside the country?”

“Fuu, if it’s inside the country...‘that’ swordsman clan...the Eris family will protect the king. It’s not so easy for them to take action.”

“The Eris family...ever since the beginning, they are famous great nobles. It can be said that with them around for a day...the Roland family’s blood will never stop. Whether it is the revolution or being occupied by the other countries...it’s true that under the Eris’ protection, it would be very difficult to take His Majesty’s life. However, it would be a different case altogether if the location of His Majesty changes and royal members of other bloodlines take over...

Leaving this aside, then, since it’s difficult to kill His Majesty inside the country, what would you do if you’re one of them?”

The indirect talk really annoyed Claugh.

“You...what are you trying to say. If they can’t kill him in Roland, they’ll just let Sion go to Nelpha and kill him there, that’s all?”

Froaude nodded,

“Then, let me answer. If you’re going to kill a king outside the country, what will you do? Nelpha doesn’t have your subordinates because it’s another country, and there’s no room for failure. If you fail, wouldn’t that mean handing

the power over to the king's men...there's only one chance...then, what should you do?"

"..."

At that moment...Claugh finally realized it, and turned to Sion.

Sion added,

"That's how it is. There's some internal link between Nelpha and Roland. Most likely, it's with some noble in Nelpha..."

These words caused the nobles' expressions to change,

"How is that possible!? That Count Stearead...actually working together with other countries!? Such a shameless person!!"

"All the more reason we can't let His Majesty head to Nelpha!"

But Froaude increased the weight of his tone,

"Then, if I may ask everyone, are you going to leave the traitor with ties to Nelpha alone!? That's called shameless. The seeds of betrayal have to be removed as soon as possible!"

"Bu, but...!"

Froaude interrupted the nobles' words,

"His Majesty will not die even if he heads to Nelpha. His Majesty isn't someone who will easily die in such a place."

"Why are you so certain! You bastard...saying this out all of a sudden, you're the one who's a spy for the anti-king coalition!?"

Froaude stared at the nobles with icy cold eyes.

"...That's impossible...I can't erase this doubt now, but this action can prove my innocence. I'll go with His Majesty...I want to go to Nelpha as well, and this will be the proof of my loyalty. Then, what are you going to do? The act of going to Nelpha will be risking your lives. Is anyone of you willing to give up your lives to protect His Majesty?"

None of the nobles answered his question, and all of them showed awkward looks...

At this moment, only Nuble lifted his head,

“I understand. I’ll go too.”

He stood up, and one after another, all of them stood up to volunteer themselves with expressions showing that they were against Froaude...

And Froaude himself merely smiled back at them...

At this moment, Claugh interrupted.

“I say, oi oi. Don’t be ensnared by him so easily. Really...besides, Froaude, you’re saying that you’re going with Sion, but what happens if you’re the killer?”

“Fum, at that moment... you can kill me, the bodyguard, Major General Claugh. Or...you don’t have the confidence yourself?”

Froaude’s words were really taunting.

However...

“Even if you say it that way, I won’t fall for it. Unfortunately, I hate it when others dodge my ability. If I know that you may kill Sion in Nelpha...I’ll definitely kill you here.”

Immediately, Claugh’s red eyes showed a sharp glow. He raised his hand gently, and the fingers showed the shape of a claw as they exerted force.

Froaude faced all this coldly,

“Crimson Finger...is it. It was stained with a lot of noble blood during the revolution...”

“You’re really noisy. You’ll soon follow them, so shut up.”

Claugh growled.

However, Froaude was unsurprised at all...

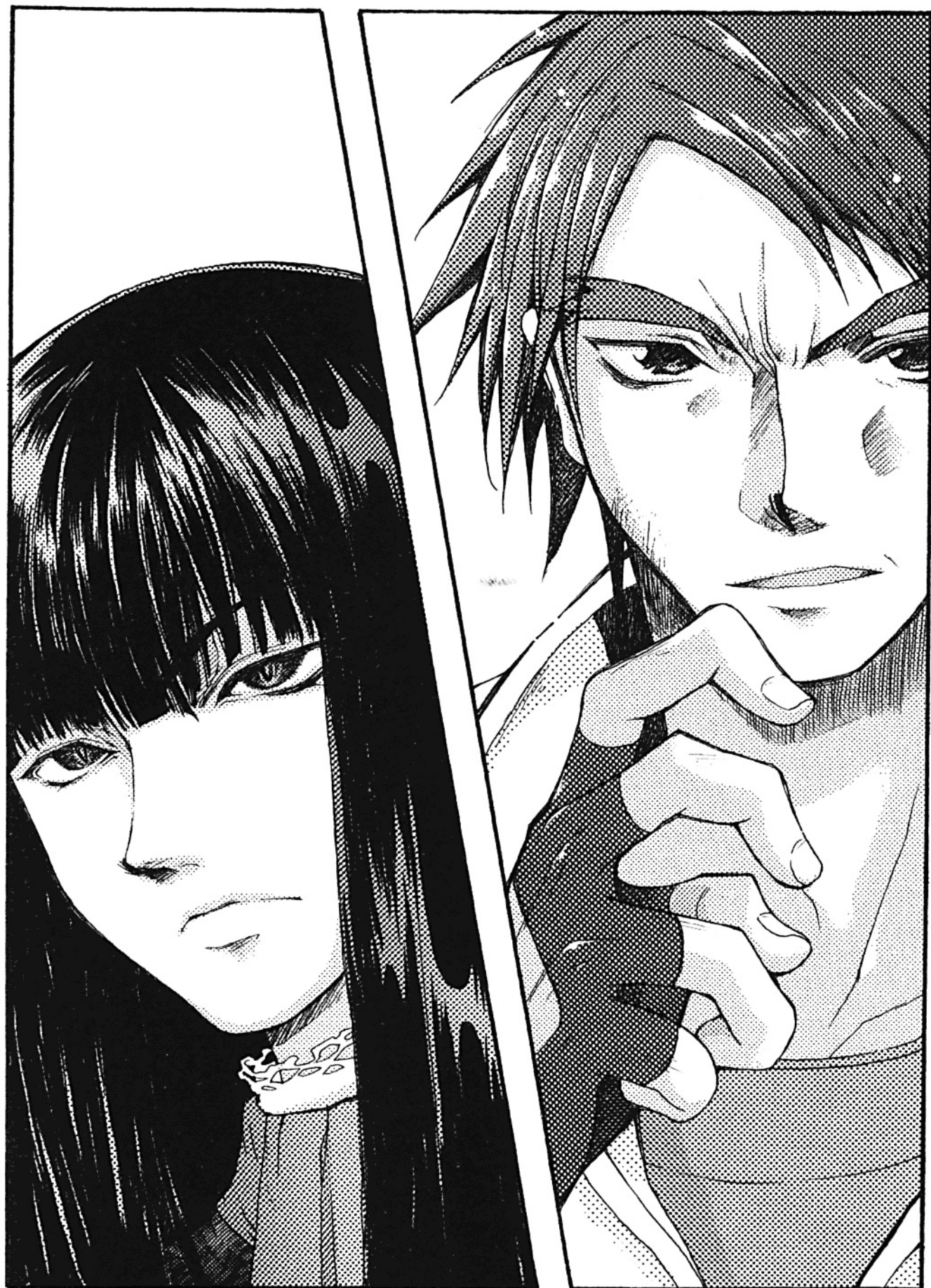
“This is unexpected...you’re not as easy to manipulate as I thought. Not falling for my taunt and forcing me to show my true face and scaring me away...as expected of the right hand of His Majesty, is it?”

He faced the calm Froaude,

“...”

Claugh lost his mood and put his hand down,

“...Tch, you bastard...you saw through it. How boring. Besides, show some fright, will ya?”



“Fm, why must I show a frightened expression? I don’t have any secret that’s hidden in the darkness, you know?”

“You...actually said such a thing with such heinous and dark eyes.”

“...”

“DON’T IGNORE ME!”

But Claugh was completely ignored, and Froaude looked at Sion,

“Then, Your Majesty, please make your decision, I’ve said what I wanted to say, but the decision lies with you, Your Majesty.”

“Nn.”

Sion looked around.

Everyone present was looking at him.

Sion smiled.

“I’ll go to Nelpha. Froaude alone will be enough to accompany me.”

Immediately, everyone present other than Froaude couldn’t help but stand up,

“WHAT!? IS THAT A JOKE!? THAT’S TOO DANGEROUS! PLEASE CONSIDER!”

“SUCH A TRUST HAS THE RISK OF BETRAYING US. BRINGING THE DANGEROUS MAN TO ANOTHER COUNTRY...”

And Claugh,

“Oi, Sion, isn’t that a little too much? At least bring Calne and me along too.”

But Sion shook his head.

“If it’s a trap, it’ll be dangerous to head to Nelpha. I can’t let everyone go to such a dangerous place. If there’s a need to bear such danger, only I and Froaude who raised the suggestion here will be enough. Also, if I’m not here, we need people to suppress the nobles...”

“But that’s too dangerous as well. At least bring a few people you can trust.”

But Sion didn’t accept this as he merely chuckled in an interesting manner,

“No need for that. No, I suppose it’s better not to have any. I don’t know what kind of trap the nobles set up for me in Nelpha...but there are some interesting people who are thinking the same thing as me and are headed there. They... may not listen to my orders in that situation.”

Sion gave a wry smile as he said that, and Claugh gave an intrigued look.

“Interesting people?”

Sion whispered softly to Claugh’s voice,

“I said it to you before, right? That guy who took down all 50 members of the Estabul magic knights.”

“Wha...at, that one? The owner of the ‘Alpha Stigma’...”

Sion didn’t answer him as he looked around,

“It’s decided. I’m going to visit Nelpha Imperia. Everyone, please make your preparations as quick as possible.”

The king’s orders were absolute.

And it was decided.

The people around the table stood up.

“Understood.”

Everyone was dismissed.

Chapter 4 A night of wandering

Part 1

The whole of Nelpha Imperia was in chaos.

It couldn't be helped. The Roland Empire, which had conquered the Kingdom of Estabul, became a powerful neighboring country, and the new Roland Empire's king was going to visit their country.

Anyway, even though it looks like it was aimed at deepening diplomatic ties between the two countries...

But right now, nobody believed this.

The emperor of Nelpha, the nobles and even the people all believed that Roland, which had become a powerful country was starting a war to invade them, and were all tense.

Also, the one visiting was the young king who used to belong to the army and immediately disposed of the king to complete the conquest and got Roland in his hand, Sion Astal.

Young, and very ambitious.

"There will be a huge war happening soon. Can Nelpha win against Roland like this?"

That's the common understanding right now. Also, the east side of Nelpha Imperia is the Remrus Empire, an ally of Roland...

All the travelling merchants in every country were saying,

"It's better not to go near these two countries for the time being,"

And things like that,

On the streets, soldiers were assigned to all sorts of places that were possible, and the army was lined up.

The soldiers that were recruited from its conquered states were summoned to the capital Elarun.

Sion proceeded forth under such a state.

The number of soldiers he brought from Roland totaled about 2,000.

Compared to the 40,000 Nelpha soldiers that were assembled in Elarun, this definitely wasn't a lot.

This was proof that Sion didn't wish for war, and also a show.

However...

The horse slowly proceeded, and Froaude rode on the horse and moved forward.

"This is bad. Moving through such a large army...they must be rather wary."

On hearing this, Froaude's expression didn't change at all.

"This is the view all the countries have on the Roland Empire. Roland, that which conquered the Kingdom of Estabul, already doubled its national and military power immediately, and had two powerful magic systems. The total number of soldiers that could be gathered is around 200,000. This is what Nelpha fears."

"Fm."

Sion nodded, and showed himself a self-mocking smile.

"In fact, it's already a troublesome headcase for us to notify Estabul which has completely different traditions from us. We have no military reserves to start a war, and if we're not careful, the old Estabul nobles will immediately gather their army and attack...if that's the case, we have no time to care about Nelpha...in this sense, even if we have to take some risk, we have to visit Nelpha to hold them off...am I correct? Froaude?"

"What you say is correct. Also, if this visit is successful, we can also bring about a very strong impression of Roland's new king to all the countries. If successful, we can even get rid of the mice devouring our country from within."

Sion showed a reluctant look,

“So for the sake of a show, the king has to lead 2,000 soldiers through 40,000 of them.”

“Is there a problem?”

Froaude just gave a matter-of-fact look, as Sion merely chuckled,

“No problems.”

And simply answered as well.

It might be a hassle for the 2,000 soldiers accompanying him...

However, no matter the outcome, Sion’s group entered the city in Nelpha.

Part 2

The palace he was brought into was rather simple, but the impression it gave was like a painting of robust fortitude. On the sides of the path leading straight to the throne where the emperor was, there were sturdy soldiers, officials and nobles.

All of them were looking tense as they stared at Sion's group...

The few soldiers Sion brought along and Froaude were all walking carefreely,

At this moment, a voice came from somewhere,

"THE KING OF ROLAND, SION ASTAL-SAMA HAS ARRIVED!!"

At the throne slightly far away in front of him, an old man stood up.

Sion stopped and looked at him.

This was the king of this country, Nelpha's emperor. He should be more than 60 years old now, perhaps? The wrinkles that were engraved on his face showed the experience and presence of this man all the more. However, the expression shown in his eyes was gentle, kind...

He could be said to be someone completely opposite from Sion.

The Sion who was like a shining glimmer of hope leading his young country...

The people, who were most likely the old nobles which had rather high standing in this country, who were on standby beside the emperor of Nelpha, all seemed wary as they stared at Sion's group.

Sion took the stares and merely smiled.

It's obvious that he would take this attitude.

If he took a wrong move, there would be war immediately...

That's what the rumors said. It's no wonder they would be wary.

After clearing his thoughts, Sion continued to move forward, and finally arrived in front of the emperor of Nelpha...he looked at the surroundings...and cautiously lowered his head before saying, "Nice to meet you for the first time, emperor of Nelpha. We're really grateful that you would accept our sudden visit. I'm the king of Roland, Sion Astal."

As he faced this greeting, the old man...the emperor of Nelpha panicked slightly.

"It, it's really rude on my part. I'm the emperor of Nelpha, Gread Nelphi. I've vaguely heard rumors about you, Astal-sama. You started imposing good governance and are beloved by your people."

"You really like to joke there. It's still too much for me. I'm just a younger junior here, and there are still many things I can't do...the visit this time is to hear your views as a wise king, Nelphi-sama, who has reigned over Nelpha Imperia for a long time. I know this action of mine may be too rash."

"Really, you really can talk, Astal-sama."

"No, this is the fact. Anyone can understand this by looking at the people of Nelpha Imperia."

Sion looked back and looked at the soldiers and nobles who were nervously swallowing their saliva as they watched Sion talk to the emperor...smiled and said, "Everyone really looks up to you. You...no, you and everyone...managed to turn this land that had been going through long term disasters and wasted land back to a great country again perfectly. This definitely isn't something that can be done randomly. If possible, I hope that our Roland Empire will forever have a lasting friendly relationship with Nelpha Imperia."

Sion was saying this with a sincere tone throughout this.

And these words really came from deep within his heart.

Ever since this Gread Nelphi took the throne, Nelpha isolated itself from war and focused wholeheartedly towards prosperity of the country.

How much effort was need to be able to revive to such an extent?

Such hard work can't be fathomed.

Unlike the old Roland that was full of pride and greed, this is a country worthy of respect.

That's what Sion thought.

This thought seemed to reach everyone as the surrounding nobles expressions all eased up...

"Your Highness, carrying on such a bland conversation while serving the King of Roland is a little...it's rare for us to prepare a banquet."

Nelphi nodded.

"Fm. Yes. What do you think, Astal-sam? Let's continue our talk of the problems in our countries over drinks...how about this? Or are you already somewhat tired from the long distance travel?"

Sion travelled and showed an innocent smile nobody could look away from.

"I'm grateful to accept your kind intentions."

Several people ran out of the palace. *The talks are successful, Roland and Nelpha won't have any war going on between them—then, who are they going to pass the message to?*

Looking at things, it seemed that the visit to Nelpha is successful...

The burden in Sion's heart was finally lifted.

Part 3

The banquet's somewhat satisfying.

There were many amongst the nobles surrounding Nelpha's emperor, and the most important thing was that Nelpha's emperor himself could talk with me carefreely.

Everyone's proud that the country had finally managed to complete its recovery.

Not for the sake of their desires, but working for the people, for the country...

Sion smiled as he exchanged toasts of drinks with the emperor and the nobles...

Sitting beside him, Froaude whispered,

"What do you feel? I don't suppose the nobles here...aren't working together with those corrupted nobles in Roland..."

Froaude gave that piercing dark, cold and sharp expression of his as he continued to maintain a diplomatic expression and nodded, "I feel the same as well. The people here shouldn't have any relationship with power and plotting. They probably won't think of working with the nobles of Roland to kill the king of Roland."

"I feel the same too. That means there's someone else working with our nobles..."

Froaude nodded against,

"Ehh, and it should be a powerful noble in this country. If that's not the case, it's impossible to set this trap."

At this moment, Nelphi, who was fairly drunk, raised the glass of wine with the flushed face and toasted Sion,

“How about another one, King of Roland?”

“Okay, thanks for serving.”

Sion smiled as he answered back.

Nelphi gave a satisfied smile,

“Um! You have to drink! When I was young, no matter how painful things were, I would feel motivated once I started drinking with my buddies. Isn’t that right, everyone!”

As he said that, the old men surrounding Nelpha’s emperor, who drank as much as him all nodded their heads together.

“Well said, Your Highness!”

And then, they started talking about things in the past.

Sion listened happily as he continued to talk with Froaude.

“I say, Froaude, don’t you have any idea of who’s our enemy here?”

Froaude shook his head.

“I’m really sorry. I let my subordinates gather information, but right now, it’s still...however, currently, the greatest possibilities are Count Protone and the king’s only son—Starnel Nelphi.”

“Oh...the reasons?”

“As for Count Protone, the Count’s land is close to Roland’s border, so he has the highest possibility of working together with the nobles in Roland. Also, there were many bad rumors about him, including how he charges large amounts of taxes. The emperor himself has paid much attention to this, and his weak loyalty to Nelpha is also suspect...”

Sion frowned,

“I see. Such people do have some authority unexpectedly.”

“What you say is right. The Count himself seem to wield some unexpectedly definite power with the neighboring nobles.”

“...And then, what about the latter?”

“It’s easier on Starnel Nelphi’s side. He has ambition, but also has bad character, doing evil deeds as the son of the emperor and creating lots of trouble. Also...”

At this moment.

The door to the hall was crudely opened.

Walking right in front was a brown-haired man in his late thirties, light-skinned and thin. The man stared at Sion with a condescending expression.

“Heh~ So you’re the new king of Roland. You’re still young and yet you can become king. Looks like Roland is nothing much.”

He mocked.

Immediately, the entire scene seemed to descend into the freezer.

The old men who were drinking so heartily immediately became pale,

“Wha, what are you saying, Your Highness the Prince. If you say such a thing...”

But before he could finish, the man called the prince interrupted him,

“Ahh? You old geezer, who do you think you’re talking to? I’m the prince of this country! Do you think I’ll accept the views of you, a 3rd rate noble? Watch out before I kill you.”

“...”

This alone allowed Sion to see through this man completely...

Right now, nothing could be seen from this man at all...

Right now, Nelpha’s situation was such that they really wanted to avoid war, how they wanted to be a powerful country like Estabul, and yet not want to become the next target of Roland...

However, this man here didn’t think about this and said such arrogant words to the other king...if this man became king, anyone could tell what sort of attitude he would treat the country, the people with...

However, Sion continued to retain his smile,

“Oh, so this is the prince-sama. I’m the king of Roland, Sion Astal. Please guide me along.”

“Shut up. You’re just the king of a small country. Don’t talk to me...”

But this time, the prince’s words were interrupted.

Nelpha’s emperor walked over to the prince and mercilessly grabbed the prince’s hair to force him to lower his head...

The prince flailed his arms hard to struggle,

“WHAT ARE YOU DOING!??”

“SHUT UP! YOU OBNOXIOUS SON! GET OUT FROM THIS ROOM!!”

The prince looked at Nelpha’s emperor vengefully.

“Tch, let’s go.”

And the prince led his men out from this room.

Nelphi saw that he left and bowed his head deeply to Sion,

“I’m really sorry, but this is a shame to our family. You just said that I’m a wise king who rebuilt this country, Astal-sama, but in fact, as I was too focused on reviving the country, I neglected my son’s education...I really apologize deeply for my son’s rudeness...”

Sion grabbed Nelphi’s hand and lifted his head,

“No, please don’t mind. I’m still young, a king without power, and this is a fact. It can’t be helped that the prince-sama himself said so.”

“It, it’s great that you can understand...”

“Of course.”

Nelphi looked at the smiling Sion, and was moved as he nodded,

“The new king of Roland’s really amazing. If possible, I wish I had a son like you... I’ll notify all countries who have links to Nelpha as well. With that, the other countries will recognize you as a true king.”

This time, it was Sion’s turn to lower his head,

“Thank you very much.”

And the banquet restarted again.

Part 4

Inside the wide and slightly glamorous room, Sion was talking to Froaude.

“That prince...what’s the name again?”

“Starnel Nelphi, Your Majesty.”

“Fm. Starnel...huh?”

Sion muttered to himself and pondered for a short while before diverting his eyes to the side. There as a window that was built just like the window in Sion’s room in Roland, one that could see the capital of Nelpha.

The capital of Nelpha had a different arrangement from the web-shaped streets of Roland, extending out like a circle was drawn.

He looked up at the sky, and the darkness couldn’t cover the white light as the day started to brighten up.

The weak light started to cut through the dark clouds and drip down onto the land...

Seeing this, Sion said to Froaude, who had been standing beside him all this time,

“Looks like that prince-sama was thrown into the position of a divine position, that Starnel Nelphi.”

“Yes. However, that lord’s mind seems rather simple. It’s really hard to imagine him discovering any benefit while working together with the nobles of Roland. I feel that he doesn’t have such guts.”

Sion nodded.

“There’s definitely some mastermind, some noble from somewhere, like that Count Protone you were talking about.”

“About this...the truth will definitely be revealed soon. My men are

outstanding.”

“You’re trying to say that you’re outstanding, right?”

Froaude’s eyes remained cold as he showed a slight smile on his face.

“I will offer everything I have for you, Your Majesty. No matter what happens, I’ll ensure your safety, even if it means I’ll have to risk my life...”

Sion looked at the grim face of Froaude who said these words. His eyes had darkness that couldn’t be seen right into the bottom, and it was really impossible to understand what he was thinking at all.

But it was clear that these words weren’t a lie.

Sion shrugged.

“How reliable. Then, please hurry up and find the mastermind behind this.”

After saying this, he got up, walked to the window and looked outside.”

“Then, I’ll slip outside for a moment. I’ll leave the rest to you.”

After saying that, he climbed up onto the ledge and was about to jump out from the window secretly.

Immediately, Froaude’s expression showed a rare change as he widened his eyes in shock.

“Don’t kid around. Do you understand the situation now...”

“Are you trying to say that it’s dangerous?”

“Of course.”

But Sion smiled,

“But you said it. I’m...not a king who’ll die here like this easily. If it’s a king you’re willing to serve, will he die on his way to greatness? Such a king might as well die, don’t you think?”

Such words were unreasonable, but with such a king, there’s such a subordinate.

Froaude’s lips curled up as he gave a bone-chilling smile,

“I understand. Leave the rest to me then.”

“Ahh, please do so.”

As he said that, Sion easily leapt up.

Part 5

Early in the morning in Toale's house.

The earliest to wake up would be Toale, who would be preparing breakfast. And then, it would be the kids waking up inside the house and making a ruckus while running around, after that, the kids running around would sneak into Ryner's room and pinch Ryner's nose and mouth.

And then...

".....!? U...aaa...auau...I say..."

It would be Ryner, who, after having a dream, would jump up with tremendous force.

"I'LL DIE IF YOU DO THIS!!"

"KYAAH!! THE BEAST HAS AWOKED!!!"

"WHO'S THE BEAST!!!"

"Eh—, but Iris-chan said not to approach that beast before she left. He's a beast that when people who talk to him, they will give birth to babies."

"THEN DON'T GET NEAR ME!!!"

"KYAA KYAA!!!"

As he watched the kids run around while shouting happily, Ryner hugged his head and sighed,

"Besides, I've been researching hard on the information until late at night last night...OOWOWOWOW!! HOW MANY OF YOU GUYS ARE RIDING ON ME!!?"

"KYAA—!?"

"WHAT KYA!!?"

It looks like they have quite the good relationship with each other...

The kids tortured Ryner for quite a while,

“Toale nii-chan said that it’s time to eat breakfast, Ryner nii-chan.”

“Naa...got it.”

Ryner nodded away in response, got up from the bed and stretched his back,

“Hfuu...how sleepy,”

Once the kids saw that he was awake...

“Okay! Now’s the time to wake up Ferris nee-chan!!”

Saying that, they rushed out of the room, and Ryner watched them leave,

“...Actually daring to take action on Ferris, those kids sure have guts...”

Saying that, he walked out of the room...

At that moment.

“GYAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!”

It wasn’t the kya from before, but gyaa, the real screaming from kids. He was already used to this every morning.

Scratching his head as he just woke up from bed, Ryner walked towards the canteen.

And then—

As the door to the dining room opened.

“...Wait, haa?”

Ryner was dumbfounded by the scene right in front of him.

“Hey...why are you here...?”



The two people gathered at the dining table and fighting against the food lifted their heads,

“Yo, Ryner. Long time no see. Are you working properly?”

And the other person lifted her face...

At that moment,

“Iris-chan!?”

The kids behind Ryner pushed him aside and trampled on him while rushing to Iris. Ryner got trampled by them as he collapsed onto the floor...and then watched them run towards the yard outside the door with Iris like a hurricane...

It seemed that he had gotten used to climbing up from the ground,

“.....Haa...anyway, things look rather troublesome now. I’m going upstairs to sleep, so then...”

As he said that, he was about to go back, and this time, he got hit with a stronger impact than before,

“GYAAAH!!?”

Ryner was sent flying,

And then, the one who appeared was that blond beauty.

It was Ferris.

For some reason, she used this momentum to step on Ryner and trample on him, looking down at him,

“Un, what’s wrong, Ryner? Why are you sleeping at such a place?”

“...I’ll definitely kill you...ouch...I was just joking, sorry...”

GGGGGGGGGYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

For some reason, Sion looked rather satisfied as he watched this scene.

“Un, looks like you two have quite the good relationship.”

At the same time, Ryner and Ferris,

“What did you derive this conclusion from? A dangerous sex maniac like this will attack me at random occasions. I’m so scared that I’m trembling. Do you understand the heart of this weak girl?”

“Who says!! You’re the one!! Throwing such a troublesome woman over to me!! She’ll definitely kill me one day...GYYYYYYYYAAAAHHHHH!!! I’LL DIE!! I’LL MOST LIKELY DIE!!”

Sion smiled wryly.

“You two really have quite the good relationship. It wasn’t like this when I was with Ferris.”

On hearing that, Ryner’s group...

Ryner’s body jumped up and steadied itself with a skilled motion before finally standing up,

“I’M GOING TO EXPLODE!! I CAN’T TAKE IT ANYMORE TODAY!! I’M GOING!!!”

And got into a pose. However, Ferris was rather relaxed on seeing him like this,

“Nn. Bring it.”

Immediately, Ryner and Ferris crossed each other...

And like usual...Ryner collapsed onto the floor,

“Uu...I’ll definitely kill you one of these days...it’s impossible against Ferris, but at least I must take Sion on...”

He muttered to himself with a weak voice...

Leaving that aside for now.

Ryner, Ferris, Sion, Iris, Toale and his siblings were all gathered at the dining table to eat.

As the siblings were yapping away, Toale asked,

“I heard that Sion-san is your cousin, Ryner-san...”

Ryner and Ferris glanced at each other...

Ryner answered,

“What are you saying? How can I possibly be cousins with such an evil person...”

And at the next moment, Sion kicked Ryner under the table and stamped on the foot...

“I say...uaa...that was a joke?...”

Unlike how Sion kept smiling so readily, the blunt pain caused Ryner to be unable to talk.

However, Sion continued to show the smile of a good youth as if what happened under the table didn't happen at all, “That's how it is, Toale-san. Really, this guy loves to slack...if I don't watch him, he'll sleep all day and night...also, he's always stalking behind girls butts...”

Ryner showed extreme displeasure to what Sion said,

“I say, Sion...you...ARGH!!?”

However, he couldn't speak as his foot felt a tremendous sharp pain again...

Ryner had no way out,

“Ye, yeah. Un, Sion and I are cousins...really, this guy always had a bad personality right from the beginning, always throwing me into the furnace and forcing me to travel with a violent woman. Because of this guy, I suffered so much hardship...during this time, due to the violence from Sion and Ferris, I've been feeling that life's full of despair...at this time, I definitely can't make it if I don't make it up with by sleeping...”

“Haven't you been sleeping?”

“I'M TRYING TO SAY THAT I WANT TO SLEEP FOR THE ENTIRE DAY!”

This time, it was Ferris' turn to speak,

“Nn. Well, someone like you who goes out every night and attacks women when the sky's dark and the moon's high would definitely want to sleep.”

“Why is it that I don't have any memories of your words at all...?”

Sion added,

“Sleepwalking?”

“NO!!”

Toale happily watched their conversation from beside,

“The three of you really have quite the good relationship.”

“SINCE WHEN!!?”

The three of them all shouted out their protests in unison...

Leaving this aside for now, the three of them continued to tuck in the food Toale prepared...and Ryner said,

“Oi Sion, speaking of which, why are you here?”

Sion merely answered simply,

“Just so happened that I was on the way nearby.”

“Ah? Don’t lie to me. How is it possible for you to pass by here so randomly.”

However, he had no intention of answering Ryner’s words,

“Besides, I saw Iris-chan enter the door to this house and wanted to greet her, but Toale-san greeted me, so it was like that.”

“No...I don’t mean that...I say, you, are you intending to ignore my question completely?”

“Ahh.”

“What do you mean by that!?!...Why is it that I know of such a person...”

Ferris nodded,

‘Yeah. Anyway, I’m always with a beast like you that can’t be talked through with common sense. This pitiful maiden is always being teased by you...”

“...Pitiful maiden? What kind of mouth would say such things?”

“Fm, It’s the mouth of this person who will let out a beautiful pixie-like singing from her lips every time she opens her mouth.”

Now that she mentioned it, it’s more like a demon than a pixie as she said it in such a monotone manner. On hearing that, Toale couldn’t help but comment, “Heh? You’re good at singing, Ferris-san?”

“Um. I often hum when I’m bathing.”

Immediately,

Ryner and Sion glanced at each other, and were completely speechless.

Ryner grumbled,

“No, no way...humming when bathing...”

Then, Sion too whispered,

“I, I say, Ryner... Ferris can actually sing...have you heard of this before?”

“How would I know? Such a scary thing...or rather, anyone who heard of it would definitely be killed now, right?”

“Ah, you’re right.”

The two gents got more into it the more they whispered to each other...

After that, both of them collapsed onto the ground as if they were friends...

Now, why was that so?

Part 6

Soon after,

As they watched Iris as the kids ran around in the garden, the three of them were enjoying the red tea Toale prepared after the meal as they continued to talk with him.

Sion asked,

“But you’re actually someone who inherited the blood of royalty in this country? I heard from Ryner that you’re the grandson of Gread Nelphi-sama...”

Toale gave a bitter smile as he shook his head,

“I’m not someone amazing, Sion-san. That man...my father produced a lot of kids in all sorts of places, so we were dumped here as we got in his way. There was no one left to take care of them, and I’m the only one doing so...I do feel that my siblings can’t just rely on me. They hope to see their real father and mothers and this is something I can’t do...”

And then, with a somewhat lonely expression, he watched the kids playing around in the garden.

Sion smiled. According to Ryner’s report, Toale had quite the popularity amongst the people, and a lot of people hoped for Toale to become the next king.

This was to be expected, Sion thought. That prince couldn’t be compared to Toale at all.

If it was Toale, he would definitely become an outstanding king. He knew about the pain of the people, and they knew about kindness.

However...

His mother was the same as Sion’s, low status women—and to coin the term

used by the nobles, a wretched woman. That's why Toale would be unable to become king.

Unless he started a revolution like Sion...

Or for some reason, the prince lost his power, and there would be no way out for this...

But this might be a good decision as well.

There's no need for this kind youth to walk down a similar path as Sion's.

And—

Ryner finished up the red tea and yawned,

"It's not exactly misfortune when your parents aren't around. The kids know who loves them the most. They can become stronger and healthy this way."

On hearing this,

Immediately, Sion widened his eyes and stared at Ryner,

In response,

"Wha, what now...?"

Ryner was somewhat intimidated by Sion's serious expression,

"Ry, Ryner...you actually said something proper for once...what kind of earth-shattering change will happen today!?"

"I say, oi oi, what kind of person do you think I am..."

Ferris interrupted his words,

"Don't worry, Sion. There's still a continuation to this man's words. 'that's why I'll say that I love them, so marry your youngest sister to me, Toale'."

On hearing that, Ferris couldn't help but shake her head reluctantly,

"Really unbelievable. To think that you've become so perverted... I see that I have a need to deal with you here for the sake of this world."

".....Ahh really!! Fine, fine, I understand!! It's my fault, fine by you...I'm going to sleep!!"

After saying that, Ryner leaned on the back of the chair and closed his eyes.

But Toale,

“Ahaha. The three of you really look to be on rather good terms with each other...”

He said as he stood up to clear the cups of red tea,

“But Ryner-san. Thank you for encouraging me here.”

Ryner closed his eyes,

“Nn~”

And answered back at him flatly with a gentle expression.

Part 7

The trio returned to the room, and without Toale knowing, started to exchange information immediately.

About how Ryner's group intended to stay inside the capital for the time being, the rumors of information in Nelpha, and the progress on the research into the relics.

And then, Sion talked about his visit to Nelpha as the king.

It seemed that a lot of heinous plots were going on, most probably aiming at Sion's life.

Listening to Sion's words were Ryner, who was lying on the bed and Ferris, who just had her meal and was now chewing on the dango Iris brought along.

Sion looked at the two people who didn't seem to look interested.

"And because of this, your country's king is being targeted. I hope that you can be my guards for the time being. How about that?"

But the moment he finished talking, Ryner looked rather irritated,

"Ehh~...why must I do such a thing? If it's an assassination plot, there will definitely be assassins coming over, right? It's so scary, so troublesome, so sleepy."

It's really hard to imagine these words coming out from the man who once eliminated the 50 powerful magic knights alone in the War against Estabul...

Sion again looked at the blond beauty—

She continued with a flat tone...

"Nn. Muu. Fumiu. Niu. Myomyo."

Her mouth was completely filled with dango, and her words couldn't be heard at all...

Ferris herself later realized this, and went silent before finishing the dango in her mouth with the same speed...

The room was temporarily filled with the sound of chewing, hakuhakumogumogu.

She finally finished her dango, and drank a sip of tea in a relaxed manner to clear her throat,

“Nn, so that’s how it is.”

“I SAY, WHAT ABOUT THAT!?”

Immediately, Ryner and Sion shouted out in unison.

Sion looked rather lethargic as he faced these two people. However, he wouldn’t give up as the reactions from these two were within his expectations.

So Sion snorted,

“Ryner, do you know of the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad?”

“Naa? Why are you mentioning this all of a sudden? Of course I do. They will pursue, capture or eliminate anyone who studied Roland’s magic that were escaping towards other countries without being given official reasons to ensure that Roland’s magic won’t be revealed to other countries. It’s a dangerous squad, am I right?”

“Yup. You really know that well.”

“Sorta. I came from that special institute, and my first mission was to go there. The ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad that everyone hated was...I won’t talk about those old years. Then? What about them?”

“They’re pursuing you.”

Sion simply answered.

For a moment, Ryner didn’t understand him and remained silent for half a beat...

“Haa?”

He couldn’t help but raise his voice. Sion nodded in a satisfied manner,

“Then, I should say that it’s appropriate that they would chase after us.”

Ryner panicked,

“No no no, wa, wait a sec, Sion. Why must I be pursued by the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad!?”

“Un? Don’t tell me you have no idea why? You used Roland’s magic, escaped from prison, kidnapped a blond beauty and destroyed the sentry gate of a border. Shouldn’t you be pursued?”

“Wait...haau...no well...let me ask again, okay? Listen up, listen properly, okay? Why, must, I, be chased, by, the, ‘Ta, boo, Break, er’, Pur, suit, Squad!? I was forced to do a job I didn’t want to do because of you—the unbelievably evil Roland King, and your command! Right? Speaking of which, I moved because of the king’s order. So why are the ‘Taboo Breakers’ after us? Isn’t this weird?”

But Sion,

“Really? But if I don’t say anything, the members of the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad will definitely have to chase after the ‘Taboo Breakers’, you know?”

“THEN JUST SAY SOMETHING ALREADY!!”

“Ahh, I see. So I just need to say so, is it? But I often feel that it’s not suitable when you don’t listen to my orders, Ryner...how about this? I’ll let the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad folks attack you when you’re taking a nap, washing your hands and eating...in that case, you won’t have enough free time alone...how pitiful...then, nn? What’s wrong Ryner? Why are you silent out of a sudden.”

As he saw Sion play dumb, Ryner clutched his head...

“Why, why must I know of such a devil...”

“Fm. So that means you’re willing to become my bodyguard?”

“.....Ahh I get it now...fine by me.”

Sion smirked,

“As expected of my good friend.”

“Shut up!”

And then, Sion turned to face Ferris...

And Ferris stared at Sion warily.

“What is it, you devil? I’m not as easy to deal with as Ryner. If the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad chases after us, I’ll kill them off.”

She said such a terrifying threat, but Sion,

“I got it, Ferris. I know that won’t work on you, so I won’t force you.”

“Nn. Good decision.”

Ferris nodded away in a relaxed manner, but Sion said with a frivolous tone again,

“Ahh yes. Speaking of which, the Wynnit dango shop wants to open a branch at the nobles’ residential area...near your house, Ferris...I’m a little troubled... what do you think, Ferris? Or is it that food shops and noble residences don’t match well? Maybe I should refuse them.”

Immediately, Ferris stood up,

“Let’s go, Ryner. What are you hesitating about? Hurry up and be Sion’s bodyguard.”

“I, I say, you, why did you immediately fall for his trick? And only at the level of dango at that...”

“Nn? Were you thinking of make fun of dango, you bastard?”

At that moment, the sharp sword drawing sound echoed throughout the room,

“I say, wa, wait a sec!! I take that back!! Tha, that’s right, dango’s the most important thing that matters in the country. I, I got it, so please sheath your sword.”

“Nn.”

Sion stared at this scene in front of him in a very satisfied manner.

“Oh my, I’m really blessed to be a king with many subordinates that think of me.”

In response to this statement, the two of them,

“One of these days, I’ll definitely spread rumors that the king of Roland’s a sex maniac, a beast, and that anyone who talks with him will get pregnant. I’ll kill you!”

“Nn. If the new branch isn’t open when I return, I’ll definitely make your head fly, you bastard king.”

These two lines that were said with real patriotism were said at the same time.

Part 8

At night where the moon rose.

The sturdy gates stood.

The few layers of walls that were severely guarded.

There were many soldiers assigned inside the sturdy walls, and the guards were so strict that they wouldn't let a cat pass by.

Of course, that's to be expected as this was the emperor's residence, and with the king of the neighboring country being hosted in this city, it would be weird if they didn't keep guard.

In such a situation, nobody should be able to sneak around inside this city.

If they were ordinary people...

But there were 6 suspicious shadows on the roofs under the moonlight.

The black clothed men were all in black and had agile limbs as they held onto the roofs of the city.

Their target destination was—

However—

As they arrived where they were headed to, a small window suddenly opened. Inside the female officer who opened the window tentatively poked her head out of the window to look, spotted the men in black and waved them over.

Most likely, she was a planted agent tasked with bringing the black clothed men in.

The black-clothed men all ran straight toward that place.

Part 9

As they faced such a scene.

“...”

Not far away, there were people standing on a roof, watching all of this.

There were two of them.

One of them was lying at the spot in a completely unmotivated manner, looking unenthusiastic as he stared at the men in black clothes, “Haa...I say, I’m really tired...I slept at quite a late time last night, and I had to wake up early today as well...I say, can I just leave Sion’s matter to you and sleep here?”

It was a voice completely devoid of tension.

And the other person, a blond beauty spoke,

“That should be my line. It’s rare for Iris to bring me dango...and I should be watching the moon while eating dango to relieve the anger I have with the sex maniac in the day. How are you going to repay me for this wish?”

“...I say, you had been thoroughly venting your rage as how you wanted...”

Ryner wasn’t willing to go any further as he sighed loud and hard,

“And then, what are you going to do with that? It looks troublesome. Can we just leave them alone?”

“Nn. I want to do that too, but this concerns the fate of the dango shop. I have to do this.”

“...Then aren’t you worried about Sion’s life?”

Ferris twitched her eyebrows in a weird manner,

“Is there a need for that?”

“Nope.”

On hearing that, Ryner simply answered and stood up. He lazily moved his shoulders,

“But his personality is really rotten to the core. If he dies like that, he’ll definitely curse us...can’t be helped. Better get to work properly.”

“Nn. You’ll go then.”

“Ah!? I say, what do you mean by that? Aren’t you going with me?”

“I don’t want to do such a troublesome job.”

“I DON’T WANT TO EITHER!”

Ferris looked somewhat shocked,

“THE...THEN, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE DANGO SHOP?”

“HOW THE HELL WILL I KNOW ABOUT THAT!?”

Both of them got involved in some meaningless topic.

And with very loud voices to boot...

In the quiet night.

Right now, the city was raising a grand banquet to invite Sion, and all of them were gathered in the hall of the first level. Right now, they were at the roof level of the city, higher than the 5th level, so Sion and the rest would definitely be unable to hear their voices.

In other words, of course, the black-clothed men will hear them clearly...

The men all turned to look at Ryner’s group,

“Wha...since when were you there...I couldn’t detect your presence at all...”

“What are those two...”

The masked clothes showed sharp icy stares that only real killers would give, and these stares were shot at Ryner’s group.

Ryner used his usual slow expression to take the stares without worrying,

And then,

“Ferris, we were discovered because of those stupid words you said, right?”

Besides, these guys...look like the real deal. They seem strong.”

But Ferris was using that usual emotionless poker face as well,

“Looks that way after all, but this shouldn’t be a problem for you.”

“Heh. That’s really unexpected. You have a rather high evaluation of me.”

Ferris nodded hard,

“Every night, you will continue to run around the streets to attack women. You had experienced countless battles and yet never got caught, so even I will have a sort of respect for that...”

“I DON’T NEED THAT KIND OF RESPECT!! Haa...I was really stupid for actually having that kind of expectation of you...no, but it’s true that no matter what kind of opponents there are, in front of your unscrupulous violence without second thoughts...”

Immediately, the sound of a sharp sword being unsheathed could be heard,

“.....No, well...I don’t mean it that way...everything will be fine with that graceful swordsmanship of yours.”

As Ryner was saying these words, one of the black-clothed men said,

“Can’t be helped. We don’t know where these two are from, but since they are witnesses, we have to shut them up. Go.”

The men all attacked.

A pair of dazed eyes and a pair of emotionless eyes stared at this,

“It’s troublesome...but lets go.”

“Nn.”

Both of them started to move.

Ferris started running, and Ryner weakly flailed his arms to draw the magic array only Roland would have.

On seeing this, the men in black stopped...

“You guys...are henchmen from Roland!?”

A cry was heard, and the trio standing right at the front got into position and

draw their sharp daggers from their clutches...

And then, the trio standing at the back start to wave their hands in complicated ways as they draw light seals in the air.

On seeing this, Ryner,

“Heh, that magic use...that means you’re assassins from Nelpha? I thought the nobles from Roland were behind this...I won’t use this spell then.”

After that, Ryner removed the spell in his hand.

At the next moment, the three men standing in front clashed with Ferris.

The men shouted,

“You’re just a woman. What can you do to such!”

“How unfortunate you are to be facing us...”

And then, the men swung their daggers at Ferris with unbelievable movements.

As Ryner said right at the beginning, these guys were all the real deal. There’s no opening to be found amongst them as they were in a perfectly linked formation. Even though they’ll definitely not appear on the stage of history, a battalion led by stupid soldiers will definitely be unable to match up against the six of them...

However, this beauty’s expression doesn’t change...

“Such noisy assassins.”

One can say that she steadfastly drew the sword at her waist and threw it into the air.

Then, she kicks the dagger in front of her and sends it flying away, uses her fingers to catch the other daggers that came attacking from left and right side, and threw them out into the air.

“What!?”

The men were shocked. Ferris doesn’t stop as she catches her sword and swings it.

At that moment,

There's only a sound of metal colliding, but the three daggers in the air were all hit by Ferris' longsword, stabbing into the wrists of the three men behind who were chanting spells.

Immediately,

"GYAAHHH!!"

The ones who let out the screams were obviously the men holding their wrists as they collapsed.

Ferris saw this, put the sword back at her waist and face the three men in front of her.

"Nn? Still want to continue?"

The men's faces turn pale as they jumped backward and left their places.

"Wha, what are you..."

Ferris simply answers,

"A beauty."

"..."

Everyone present is speechless...

In the long silence, her face is the only thing blushing for some reason—let's leave this aside for now.

The men all look like they're ready to die,

"But since we failed, we have no place to go! At least, at least we have to get rid of both of them..."

But the men's words stop,

They stare at Ryner, who's looking unmotivated as he waves his hands in a complicated manner and draws a seal after another...

"Wha, what's going on..."

The men shuddered...

“Why do you...why you...you who use Roland’s magic...can use Nelpha’s magic...”

This is really unbelievable.

The magic style for each country is different. No, it’s not an exaggeration to say that they’re two completely different kind of spells. How to activate? What form of medium? Does it require incantations? Is there a need to draw a magic array? Is there a need to draw a seal?

Anyway, these are all different right down to the fundamentals.

That’s why it’s not easy to use other countries’ magic, and why it’s dangerous for another country to know one country’s magic system...

That’s why, if magic is leaked to other countries, they would send the assassination squad called the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad after them.

This explains sufficiently why using other countries’ magic is such an abnormal thing...

But Ryner looked really sleepy as he crisply used Nelpha’s magic.

This caused the men to be dumbstruck,

“How did you do tha...”

At this moment, one of the men called out as if he noticed something,

“THA, THAT GUY’S EYES...THAT GUY’S EYES ARE SHOWING PENTACLES!?”

The men immediately panicked,

“WHAT!? DON’T TELL ME THAT GUY’S THE OWNER OF THE ‘ALPHA STIGMA’ THAT BRINGS ABOUT CALAMITY!?”

The men’s faces cringed as they cried.

‘Alpha Stigma’.

This term was always spread with fear and hatred...

The crimson red pentacles appeared in Ryner’s eyes, and the men who saw

them looked like they were dragged into an endless darkness. These eyes can see through any magic from the structure to the phenomenon, analyze them and take them as their own, No, that's not the only thing that people feared about the 'Alpha Stigma'...

"Impossible! This monster of an 'Alpha Stigma' bearer...can't possibly work for others while being sane...it's unheard of!"

"Roland actually has such a monster!?"

"..."

In response to these words, Ryner's eyes that are showing pentacles narrow sadly,

"You guys said such horrible things. It's not like I wanted to be a monster myself..."

Ferris nods in agreement,

"Un, but you're always being a beast on the bed all day..."

"Okay okay, you're really noisy. Please keep quiet for a while."

Ryner's sad eyes close as he grimaces.

And then,

Ryner faces the assassins who're wavering after seeing him use Nelpha's magic,

"Breath of wind, lend us thy power."

He casually chants away.

The surrounding wind gathers drastically, forming a cyclone as it attacks the men.

The men couldn't even fight back at all as they're hit directly...

They're all cut by the wind, and unable to fight.

The battle ended.

After that,

"Fuu."

Ryner sighs weakly, and Ferris tilts her head,

“Um. We won easily too. But Ryner...you, why did you spare them and not kill them? If it's you, you can simply attack their hearts, right?”

But she had no intent on waiting for Ryner's answer...

For some reason, Ferris keeps her usual emotionless state as she seems somewhat shocked,

“Do, don't tell me...you feel that it's not enough for you to act on women and kids, and you're baring your poisoned fangs at these men!?”

“I say, you don't have any intention of listening to my reply, right?”

“Of course.”

“DON'T SAY IT SO DIRECTLY!!”

And they continue bickering for a while...

Ryner feels a lot more tired than he felt during the battle,

“Then, what do we do with these guys? We can leave them here, but it'll be troublesome cleaning up after this. I don't want to do that.”

“Um, we have three options to choose from.”

Ryner agrees,

“That's right. Those three, right? First choice will be to capture them, second choice will be to kill them, and third choice will be to release them...alright, which should we choose? They can't possibly attack Sion again...such professionals will not attempt a second time after failing once. I feel that the third option is better.”

Ferris shakes her head seriously,

“Nope, go for choice two. Call Iris here and eat dango as we watch the moon.”

“...I say, you didn't listen to what I said, did you? Or do you not have any intent to listen?”

“Of Course...”

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY OF COURSE!”

Though both of them continue to bicker, they just left the men where they were. Besides, these assassins won't know the real names of the ones who hired them, and even after capturing them, they won't get much information. Both of them are completely unmotivated by this, “I feel so tired...never mind. It's a 100 times more tiring arguing with you than dealing with those assassins...”

“Um, of course. Someone like you who's born a baddie will definitely be hurt interacting with me who has an angelic-like heart.”

“...The hurt part's the only correct thing...”

On this night, both of them continue to chat away with good (?) relationships as they leave the place.

Part 10

On the other hand, the banquet ended peacefully, and Sion has returned back to his own room.

The long hours of maintaining that false smile as he chatted with them made him somewhat tired,

“Fuu. Anyway, I’m still alright...”

He mutters to himself as he lies on the bed and looks up at the ceiling.

But right now, his life is certainly being targeted.

He fully felt this at the banquet. There was killing intent coming over from all over the place, stares of evil intent. Some of the nobles who stood in front of him were smiling, but all gave an ominous presence of wanting to kill Sion.

They were definitely all rookies.

If they were professionals, they would not let others know of their thoughts.

They will approach when their target is not aware, kill him, and quickly leave.

They will not make any contact other than with the target...

This is an iron room. That’s why, even if they were people who wanted to kill Sion, nobody could do so.

Perhaps they would appear in a completely different scene. However, he can’t detect their presence at all,

“...Fm, Ryner’s group was successful, huh...?”

As he thought about this, the uneasy feeling disappeared for some reason.

Suddenly, someone knocks on the door, and Sion lifts his head,

“Oh, you’re finally here.”

A grim, cold voice came from the door.”

“I’m late, Your Majesty. Investigations are complete. Please allow me to enter.”

“Un, please do.”

The moment Sion finished, the door was opened.

As Sion watches the person walk into the room...

“...”

His golden eyes narrow.

It’s Frouade.

The usual ominous looking expression now has become something even colder.

From behind his back, Frouade tosses something weird into the middle of the room,

“This is one of the masterminds this time. Count Werias. I could hear quite some interesting things from him.”

He said calmly.

But Sion didn’t say anything.

No, he couldn’t say anything. He can only see what fell in front of him.

The thing introduced as Count Westria had lost its arms and limbs. No, that’s not it. The body itself was thoroughly wrecked...these wounds all looked like he'd been devoured by something...

It was truly a mystifying scene.

What exactly did Frouade do to Westria...?

He couldn’t help but wonder.

However, Sion closes his eyes, takes a deep breath, and lifts his face.

“Tell me the conclusion of the report.”

Frouade seems to be rather happy after hearing that as his lips curl up.

“As expected, it’s really great to have you as king.”

“...What do you mean?”

“Of course, I just feel it’s really great to be your servant, a master who doesn't say anything even after seeing such a thing. Even though you have a bright light surrounding you...you also have a vast darkness within you. That is why I will serve you with all I have.”

On hearing that, Sion can’t help but grimace.

However, he doesn’t say anything else as he simply nods at Froaude’s answer.

Froaude sees this, and continues to explain calmly.

“According to what this man said...the mastermind this time was definitely the prince and the nobles who surround him. The reason seems to be because the current king doesn’t favor the prince who was born, but a certain son of the prince. The prince was rather unhappy about this, so he wanted to assassinate the current king to make himself the king of this country...that’s what he thought.”

However, to achieve this aim, he needs powerful backing. You have your own power, Astal-sama, and managed to attain your current standing after rising through the ranks of the army. However, this shameless prince and his nobles wanted to use the power of the nobles of Roland. But speaking of which, there’s the question of whether our nobles here are worth trusting.

He gives a faint smile as he says that. Sion nods,

“Yeah, this is a common thing.”

“Yes.”

“And then, have you found out the names of the Roland nobles working with the insiders?”

“As for this...it seems that the nobles of Roland were only providing monetary assistance, and weren’t willing to reveal their names.”

Sion grins,

“Haha, looks like our nobles here are more apt at doing a mastermind’s job.”

“...One of these days, we will have to deal with this.”

Froaude said. Deal with, as in exterminate.

Sion sighs and sinks into deep thought.

No...I've already used my own hands and the hands of my subordinates...to kill lots of people. There's no reason to hesitate now.

But Sion continues to stare at his own hands, and sighs.

He feels that his own hands are all bloodstained.

He gives a self-mocking smile as he thinks about how he doesn't have the right to touch his mother with these hands of his...

Now's not the time to think about this. He focuses his attention on the current topic at hand.

No matter what, I know who the enemies in Nelpha are.

What should I do next...

I'm not in my own country, but another country. I can't settle this by getting rid of the prince.

And—

Froaude speaks up,

“From my point of view, you should approach the prince of Nelpha, Your Majesty. Take the place of the Roland nobles and ask to assist the prince of Nelpha.”

“Hoh. And then help that foolish son assassinate the current king?”

“Yes. With such a foolish person becoming king, this country will easily collapse.”

Frouade simply answered.

For that moment, Sion pauses as if he were in deep thought, and then shrugs his shoulders,

“You really want me to gain control of the Menoris Continent...but I really don't want to do that, you know? I don't want to start unnecessary wars.”

“That is alright. I hope for the real king. This isn't your wish, but the wish of

the world. Even if you...reject everything...I feel that you will wish for such a thing one day..."

"I won't wish for this."

"I'll wait for you to reach that moment then."

Froaude simply answered calmly.

Sion is speechless in response to this, and then chuckles,

"My subordinates are all really scary guys."

"...Can I view this as praise and accept it?"

"Haha. What do you think? But right now, I have to teach those guys from Roland a lesson. If the foolish prince takes over and ruins Nelpha, we'll be pulled down. In such a situation, we have to let Nelpha owe us a favor. I'll talk to the king and let him decide on the punishment on the prince."

Sion's words cause Froaude to become quiet...

"I'll obey your orders."

He said, and lowered his head.

Part 11

That night, Nelpha Imperia suddenly sank into chaos.

Sion explained everything about this to the Emperor of Nelpha.

One wrong step would have caused a war with Roland...

And to avoid this, the nobles who thought about the country, with the Emperor of Nelpha leading, ran throughout the country.

First, it was the capture of the mastermind this time, the prince of Nelpha Imperia, Stearead Nelphi.

And then, the nobles who assisted were all captured one by one...

This was a battle against time.

A single delay will cause the anti-king nobles to escape.

They had to deal with all these in one night...

But luckily, most of the nobles were all gathered inside the city as part of the party in the name of welcoming the king of Roland, and pretty much all the masterminds were caught.

Right now, most of the nobles, with the Emperor of Nelpha leading, were bowing towards Sion.

“Such a situation really brought trouble to you...to think that you could have such a magnanimous heart even with such a development and chose not to start a war against our country...”

Sion looks rather sheepish,

“No, it’s the same for us as well. The Roland nobles are heavily involved in this as well. Please don’t apologize, your Highness of Nelpha. I won’t have any standing now, would I? Please don’t mind.”

“...I can’t express my gratitude enough...I feel proud that my neighbor, the kingdom of Roland has a king like you, Astal-sama.”

Sion smiles,

“That should be what I should say. There aren’t many kings who can bow down to other kings for the sake of their countries. As long as Nelpha’s king Gread Nelphi-sama is around, I won’t have to worry about my country’s Northern border.”

The people of Nelpha are really impressed and rendered speechless by Sion’s attitude.

Part 12

Anyway, this is all over...it should be.

But—in the darkness of the night, Froaude was standing there.

His surroundings were scarlet red, as if they're all dyed in blood.

Blood, blood and blood.

Seeing this, he chuckles,

“So these are the remnants of the nobles who planned this? I finally dealt with them...”

Froaude muttered to himself as he looked around at the men, women, everything within his range all stopped breathing...

He takes a breath, looks up at the sky and checks the position of the moon. The night will continue for a while. Looking at this, he sees the corpses surrounding him, all without life.

“Such a nice night. Sweet dreams, everyone...”

Saying that, he walked into the darkness,

“Alright, there's one left...I suppose. I can't let anyone who can get in Astal-sama's way to live. I'll use this chance to eliminate all who get in the way of His Majesty...I must do so before daylight...”

After saying that, he left without presence.

The moon in the sky is starting to tilt...

Dawn will not break for the time being.

Chapter 5 Ones that hide in the darkness

Part 1

Toale's house was in the midst of silent slumber.

Ryner peeked around like a kid coming back early in the morning and hiding from his parents as he snuck in through the windows...

"Ahh~ how tiring...really, what time is it now? Dawn is about to break now, right? I'll definitely be woken up by those kids later again...and my stomach seems to be grumbling."

He grumbled to himself.

Ferris then followed him in by slipping into the room through the window silently,

"Nn. I still have some dangos. Do you want to have some as we watch the moon?"

"Oh, not bad. But my stomach is most probably going to be full."

"Fm, dangos won't make you full, don't you know?"

"Don't lie to me."

"It's true. At least for me, I've never had a bloated stomach when I eat dangos."

"...That's because you're a monster."

"You have no right to say that to me when you're the ultimate sex maniac."

"Fine fine."

Both of them continued to talk as they prepared the dangos and lined two chairs towards the window where they could see the moonlight. They then sat down and ate the dangos Ferris prepared.

Soon after,

In this quiet night, the sound of them chewing on dango could be heard.

From both of them, Ryner and Ferris.

Ryner stared at the moonlight with his sleepy eyes.

“But even though it’s a little weird to say such things, the moon I see in Roland doesn’t seem to be any different from the moon I see in Nelpha.”

Ferris’ hand that was holding a dango stopped as she narrowed her eyes and stared at the moonlight.

“Nn. That’s true. They’re both round.”

“...I say, is that a thought or something? There is no feeling in this at all. You should at least feel something, right?”

“...For example?”

“Eh? Ahh—that, for example...the moonlight’s yellow...wait, ahh, that’s not good. I can’t think of a good analogy at all. I won’t be able to get a girl like this as well.”

And then, he smiled in a slight self-mocking manner.

‘However, I’ve never gotten one before anyway...’

At that moment, Ryner used his hand to cover his eyes.

What existed there were—

Things that anyone would fear, curse and detest...

I know more than anyone how dangerous I am...

I kept calling Ferris a monster, but I am the real monster...

That’s why I had always intended to avoid people.

I didn’t want to hurt the people I liked or the ones were kind to me...

I...I don’t want to kill them...

On thinking about this, Ryner glanced at Ferris, who continued to eat her dango, and sighed.

“...”

Sion said that he wanted him, the him with the ‘Alpha Stigma’.

Also, Kiefer didn’t know whether to call him a monster...

And Ferris may have already heard of his situation from Sion, but continued to sit beside him calmly,

“Nn. It’s true that you should learn how to hook up with women. If you continue to attack women upon seeing them, you most definitely can’t go to heaven.”

She said such a thing.

The people who had been with him recently were all people like this.

They knew of his true identity, yet it seemed like they were not scared of him at all. Also, they wanted to approach his heart gradually.

This was...

A remarkable feeling.

Perhaps I will hurt them one day, will I kill them? This fear expanded in his chest, but he couldn’t close up the feelings in his heart.

He was definitely scared...

His heart was so shaken that he felt sadness.

A lot of things happened before in the past.

But that girl...he left that girl before he managed to hurt her.

And what about now?

Right now...

Ryner stopped thinking and stared at Ferris,

“Really, you’re such a troublesome person.”

“? What are you saying?”

Ferris stared at Ryner.

The beautiful narrow and long eyes lacked emotions, and Ryner took her stare

with his calm eyes.

“No, it’s nothing.”

The room was very quiet.

The moon was tilted.

He could only hear Ferris’ weak breathing.

It was a strange atmosphere.

Some sort...

Something...

Ryner immediately stood up.

Showing a serious expression.

“Ferris.”

And then...

“Nn. I noticed it.”

She nodded.

She then stood up and took the sword that was placed aside.

“Something is coming.”

“Ahh. But, what is that? It’s like...some amazing killing intent. And there’re a lot of them...are they the assassins from just now? Are they here for revenge?”

“...Do you really think that way?”

Ryner’s face showed a very tense smile,

“No, these guys...aren’t on that level. Rather, are they human? This,”

The killing intent that was slowly closing in was really unbelievable.

It felt like a killing intent that was more like a beast than a human with rational thoughts. Several of them were closing in, and Ryner took a step back,

“What should we do...?”

Ferris’ sharp narrow eyes stared over at Ryner,

“The opponent with this killing intent is coming over after having detected us. We can’t escape.”

“.....Really, we can’t use this house as the battle stage ...the kids are still sleeping. How about we accept this invitation...?”

“Nn.”

After saying that, the two of them jumped out of the window again.

Part 2

It was a place reasonably far from the front door of Toale's house.

The green courtyard that people would pass by whenever they head in or out in the day was now in complete darkness.

There was a silent and beautiful moon.

There was a man standing there.

Only one person, a man was there, draped in black clothes as if he fused into the darkness.

From his body...

For some reason, there were multiple killing intents shooting out.

The man's beautiful long black hair swayed in the air, and the bottomless icy-cold eyes stared at Toale's house. At this moment, "Oi, the one you're aiming at isn't there. We're here."

Ryner called out to him.

And then, Ryner and Ferris arrived in the courtyard.

The man looked over at Ryner's group.

"...Hou. To think that you would actually come out to take me on...did you intend to ambush me here after discovering that I was closing in?"

Ryner shrugged,

"I say, anyone can notice such a powerful killing intent you released."

The man chuckled,

"That's too kind...most of the people who can notice this killing intent...should be rendered immobile but this...

But both of you remain rather normal now. How impressive..."

The man looked at Ryner,

“Toale Nelphi-sama.”

Ryner widened his eyes,

“Heh?”

The man showed a troubled look,

“But it’s weird...from the report on Toale-sama’s history, he does have talent and popularity, but there’s no information that stated he had high battle capability...”

“...Wait...Toale, you say...?”

What in the world is this guy saying?

Just as Ryner was hesitating, Ferris walked forward.

“This definitely means... it’s for that reason?”

It seemed that this man that was giving off this overbearing killing intent wasn’t coming at Ryner’s group, but at Ryner.

Also, he viewed Ryner as Toale...

It was a situation where he was severely mistaken, however...



“Well, looks like this might be a troublesome situation...”

However, Ferris interrupted Ryner’s muttering to himself as she asked with an emotionless expression,

“I see. Speaking of which, who are you?”

The man cautiously lowered his head at them,

“Pardon me of my rudeness. I’m Miran Froaude. Please forgive me for coming over so late at night.”

“Not going to. If you really feel that way, please go back.”

Ferris didn’t show any mercy in her words,

The man who called himself Froaude lifted his face and showed a slight smile,

“No, I really hope to do this...but this is very critical.”

“Oh, is that so?”

“...Toale-sama’s name has spread far and wide, and the methods he uses to capture the hearts of people...can be said to be brilliant. The people all hope that you’ll become the next king, and I feel this way too. You, Toale-sama, who is blessed with aptitude, popularity is suited to be the king of this country. This country can only prosper with an outstanding king ruling.”

Nicely put. An outstanding king. If Toale becomes king, he would definitely become an outstanding one.

Ryner thought, but Ferris,

“...Stop babbling away and get to the point.”

The man’s dark devil-like eyes stared at the two of them, and then snorted coldly,

“...How troublesome. If that’s the case, I would be troubled. This country being cared for by an outstanding king would be very...I say—”

Immediately, Froaude raised his hand slightly as if he was moving the air,

“Darkness...”

The man let out a powerful pressure that couldn’t be compared to before at

all.

It seemed that this overwhelming pressure...of killing intent could kill someone directly...

Ryner's group withstood it.

"Th, this guy's...dangerous..."

"..."

Ryner and Ferris immediately leapt backwards as if they were deflected away.

At this moment—

"Appear."

Froaude's voice whispered in the dark night.

At that moment, the shadows below Froaude's feet gradually expanded...

"What's that..."

On seeing this, Ryner couldn't help but exclaim.

Black shadows flew out from the middle...and flew straight at Ryner's group.

At a speed that was so unbelievable Ryner couldn't react at all...

Ryner tried his best to move his body back to dodge, but it was still too late.

"Ku!?"

I'm going to die. Such a thought appeared, creating despair.

He could see something else moving from the corner of his eyes...

At this moment.

Giin!

The sharp sound of metal colliding rang. Unknowingly, Ferris was standing in front of Ryner, using her sword to block the black shadow.

She swung the sword down to shake off the shadow.

"Don't just stand there! Do you want to die?"

".....I'd say, you're the weird one to be able to react to such a thing!!"

Ryner got into position as he called out, and as he saw Ferris parry away the shadow...

Ryner was stunned.

That shadow had the appearance of a beast. It was a mysterious beast that was like a fusion of a wolf and a bear...

It had limbs that were blacker than darkness, sharp fangs and claws, and its mouth was oozing out a black saliva-like fluid that immediately dissolved and disappeared once it flowed to the ground...

Ferris asked,

“Oi, Ryner, what’s that...?”

“...How would I know about that...is it...magic? But that guy doesn’t look like he used magic at all, you know? Let me go check now.”

After saying that, Ryner closed his eyes. Once he opened them again, the eyes where should the crimson red pentacles...

The situation was immediately analyzed.

But...Ryner answered back in a grumbling manner,

“Ah, just like what I thought, it’s not magic...the ‘Alpha Stigma’ can’t see the form of that thing...”

“Then, what’s that thing anyway?”

“Didn’t I say that I don’t know?”

“.....How useless.”

“Ah, what did you just whisper!?”

“How useless.”

“...No, I’m very embarrassed that you said it so directly as well...”

Even though they were talking to each other in a rather frivolous manner, both of them were extremely tense.

There was an unknown enemy in front of them, an unbelievably strong one at that.

During that split second just now, Ryner's head nearly separated from his body.

This enemy wasn't like those guys from the Estabul Magic Knights. He wouldn't enjoy the satisfaction of trampling over others.

There was no sense of emotion. This enemy that actually closed in on them nearly took his head off...

"Such evil people..."

Ryner muttered and groaned. That opponent had overwhelming strength on top of that as well...

It wasn't any ordinary magic, and it was a certain something that even the 'Alpha Stigma' couldn't analyze...

Softly, Ryner said,

"It's a little troublesome...I don't know what's with him, and I can't just go near him just like that. I don't know what will happen if I get near to him..."

But Froaude looked rather amazed.

"Amazing...you actually reacted to that action just now. What are you?"

But Ferris didn't answer his question,

"What about you...what was that monster?"

"...This, you ask? This is the death god sending you on the way. And..."

Froaude muttered some other things again—

"No, no way...?"

On seeing that, Ryner couldn't help but groan. At the bottom of Froaude's feet, the unnatural-night-like large shadow let out beasts right in front of his eyes.

And this time, it wasn't just one beast; 5 beasts appeared, charging at Ryner's group with unbelievable killing intent.

It seemed that the killing intent he felt were these monsters.

Ryner frowned,

“Oi Ferris...this is troublesome...I don't think...we can run away...”

“Nn. From the way you couldn't react to their actions, it seemed that it would be very difficult. There are 5 monsters with that speed, and to be honest, I really can't protect you and fight them.”

“...You're right. I got it. I'll think of my own way then...really...why do I feel that I've been working nowadays? Can't I just do a simple menial task of taking a good ample nap that's a lot more low-key? I only wish to live such a life...”

As he said that, Ryner's hands moved fast, drawing a word of light in the air. On seeing this, Froaude couldn't help but frown, “Nn? Isn't that...magic from the kingdom of Estabul...what's going on? Nelpha's Toale-sama would actually know Estabul's magic...”

He narrowed his eyes and stared at Ryner as he said this...

“Ahh, I see. You're not Toale-sama. I was really fooled by you. You're a bodyguard or something, right? And one of the remnants of Estabul...?”

He continued to speak respectfully in battle, but Ryner didn't answer,

“I offer the contracted words, letting the slumbering malicious spirit dwell within.”

The spell was activated.

Ryner's body glowed...

He sped up.

Ryner seemed to be a completely different person from before entirely as he immediately charged at Froaude.

The shadow beasts reacted to this action and attacked Ryner...

“I'm different from before.”

Ryner's movements got faster as he dodged the sharp claws and the agape mouths, forming a magic array of light against in the air.

Immediately, the magic array was complete...

Froaude's expression changed drastically for the first time,

“Wha...Roland’s magic...? You Itsuki, what are you...”

But before he could finish, Ryner let out the spell,

“What I seek is burning fields>>>Kurenai.”

Several fireballs immediately exploded out from the magic array Ryner drew as they attacked the shadow beasts and Froaude.

Several of the shadow beasts were hit directly by the scorching fireballs and disappeared.

Froaude reached out his hands,

“Appear.”

Immediately, some sort of black thing appeared at Froaude’s feet, enduring all the fireballs Ryner let out as if it was protecting him before disappearing.

Ryner saw that,

“Tch, didn’t get him...”

And clicked his tongue...

Froaude however turned towards Ryner,

“I’m really amazing. You know Estabul’s magic and Roland’s magic? I don’t know who are you...but it seemed that you’re a dangerous person as well. As expected of the bodyguard of the future Nelpha king, I guess?”

Froaude said calmly, but one could still sense his lack of urgency in front of Ferris and Ryner like this.

That’s why Ryner clicked his tongue,

If this man actually got serious...

It was understandable. Looking at Ryner and Ferris’ movements just now, there would be no problems no matter how many of the black beasts there were.

Ryner’s movements were equal to the black beasts, but in terms of experience and mobility, Ryner had a slight advantage.

Also, if Ferris went serious, her speed—could surpass Ryner’s magic-enhanced

speed...

Undoubtedly, they were in an advantage in this kind of situation.

But...Froaude showed a slight smile.

“But since such people like you are gathered around Toale-sama, that means that I have to get rid of Toale-sama.”

“...I won't let you. Do you intend to kill off all of Toale's siblings? I still have to take revenge on them for dragging me out of bed with their crude and violent methods.’

“...What a pity. Looks like you have to be the first to die. If you have something you need to settle with Toale-sama's siblings, finish it in that world.”

Ferris then continued,

“Unfortunately, this man will definitely go to hell because of his misdeeds every day. He won't be able to meet Toale's siblings who will go to heaven.”

“...I say, why must I go to hell?”

“Nn? Am I wrong? Or is it that there's that kind of worth for people who abuse women...”

“HOW CAN THERE BE ONE!...Now's not the time to talk about such things... anyway,”

Ryner again turned to Froaude,

“It's troublesome, but I still have some things I need to investigate on at Toale's place.”

Ferris followed up,

“Nn. Our meals and lodging are all set. We can't just lose our temporary residence just like that.”

Both of them got into position, and on seeing that, Froaude,

“Is that so, I'll go serious then.”

He said, and closed his eyes,

Ferris would never let go of this chance.

She immediately charged forward, trying to slice Froaude in half...

However,

A thing that was larger than the beasts just now appeared at Froaude's feet...

It blocked Ferris' sword,

"This..."

Ryner was speechless by this unexpected thing,

It was a large humanoid monster,

No, it would be apt to say that it's a hybrid of a beast and a human...

Like the beasts just now, its entire being was darkness, it had limbs as large as tree stumps, and its tough muscles were scattered all over its arched back.

The abnormally shaped head had horns on, and its back had black wings and a sharp tail...

That look...

"Oi oi, are you kidding me..."

Was the 'demon' as normally seen in legends or fairy tales...

This demon moved its body that was much larger than the beasts just now, using its sharp tail to block Ferris' sword, "HUUIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII!!!"

It let out a discomfoting roar as it attacked Ferris. Ferris leapt to dodge the demon's punch, and as she landed, used the sword to attack its arm...

But the demon with its arm cut off didn't back away as it continued to attack Ferris, using the opening she created to attack her with the sharp claws...

At this moment, Ryner got into action,

He used the magic array that was completed instantaneously,

"What I seek is thunder >>> Izuchi."

The lightning was released, and the demon's head was blown right off from the base. Ferris immediately used the sword to stab through its heart.

"Did we get him?"

However—

Ferris shouted out,

“GU...YOU CAN'T, RYNER...RUN AWAY...”

And her words were interrupted,

Unknowingly, the demon's arm that was sliced off by Ferris used its sharp claws to stab into Ferris' back...

The wound definitely wasn't light.

Bright red blood splattered out from her back...

“FERRIS!?”

Ryner wanted to charge over, but...

“Hold it. I'm your opponent here. Ryner-kun, is that what I should call you?”

Froaude immediately got in front of Ryner to block him.

Behind him, Ferris continued to fight against the demon with her injured body. However, she was obviously being held down.

They definitely did blow the head off, sliced off the arm and pierced through the demon...

But right now, the arm and head grew back as if nothing happened...

The demon continued to attack with its stump-like thick fists, and Ferris continued to move her injured body as she dodged...

But one of the attacks hit her.

Ferris used the sword to block...

However,

“Ku...a...”

She was sent flying away with an unbelievable speed...

Ferris collapsed on the ground like a puppet with its strings snapped...

Ryner narrowed his eyes,

“Move aside.”

Froaude shrugged,

“That won’t do. Besides, you won’t be able to help much even if you go, right? She’s done. She’s more uninteresting than what I thought she was...but I guess it’s just the level she’s at. The weak are always weak, and can only bow down in front of the strong.”

In response, Ryner,

“Weak? That woman?”

The moment he said that, he started shaking his head in a mocking manner,

“...Do...you know?”

He said. With such a question directed at him, Froaude tilted his head,

“What?”

Ryner’s black eyes were showing a lazy kindness...

“That woman really has a horrible personality.”

He said such a thing,

“Also, she’s very violent, always bullies me, always eats dango, and always shows that that casual emotionless expression. Without that woman, I wouldn’t have to make such a difficult journey...to be honest, I never intended for her to save me at all.”

And Froaude smiled back,

“I see. It seems that you’re the same kind of person as me. I can let you go as long as you don’t get in my way...”

However, Ryner took action before Froaude could finish his words,

He let out a sharp punch that couldn’t be imagined from that lifeless body of his.

Froaude was hit directly in the face and was sent flying.

However, the shadows that grew out from the ground suddenly supported his body... Froaude’s mouth had blood on it as he slowly landed.

“Nn? What was that just now? Didn’t you hate that woman and want to get

away from her? Or is it that you want to fight me no matter what? I don't think you have a chance of winning...and you should have realized it, right? I can increase the number of shadows infinitely."

Ryner sighed hard,

"Ahh. I know that. For some reason, you got some unbelievable power. If possible, I hope to give up on such a troublesome thing and run somewhere else to sleep"

"Nn. Can't you just run away? That swordswoman is the stupid one for risking her life for others. Other people's lives will never be as important as oneself's. Just run all you want. I won't pursue you."

However...

"...Annoying."

Ryner muttered,

But Froaude didn't hear it clearly,

"Ha? What?"

He asked,

Ryner's sharp black eyes were staring at Froaude,

"...You really annoy me. It's better for that woman to remain expressionless all the time, for her not to react whenever anything happens, whenever she eats dango as she watches other people...she has a strength that doesn't need me to go save..."

Ryner started running,

He created several magic arrays, earth, water, fire, wind, letting out all sorts of spells.

Froaude summoned the shadows to defend, but Ryner's movements got faster.

"Izuchi."

A lightning bolt was released.

“Kurenai.”

Flames danced.

“Misumi.”

Waves swarmed.

“Chigashira.”

A giant hole was blown in the ground.

Froaude continued to create shadows to defend them...

However, Ryner caught up to Froaude, grabbed his face with the hand and pressed his head down...

“...That woman’s not someone who should collapse onto the ground like this! If you beat her so easily, wouldn’t it be shameful for me when I keep getting beat up by her?”

Such words were unreasonable.

Froaude was crushed on the ground as he gave a very bewildered look,

“Fm, then what do you intend to do?”

“I’ll beat you and make the shadows disappear.”

“You can’t do that”

But Ryner merely retorted coldly,

“That’s hard to tell. I won’t know if I don’t try. You’re...using that ring to manipulate the shadows, right?”

Immediately,

Froaude’s expression changed, and the shadows in the ground jumped up to attack Ryner.

Ryner leapt away from the ground to avoid the attack, and faced Froaude again...

Froaude pressed onto his right hand, no, the rare black ring on his right middle finger...

“...You’re really a scary person. How did you realize that?”

“What did you say? Just instinct, that’s all. Whenever you swing the hand, for some reason, my eyes would hurt. I don’t actually understand...but I noticed your hand, and saw that ring. At that moment, I remembered the legend of the Great Emperor ‘Dark Emperor’...”

On hearing that, the smile that seemed to be stuck on Froaude’s face disappeared.

He stared at Ryner with an emotionless expression,

“You Itsuki, how did you know...”

But Ryner interrupted and spoke clearly with a foreign language...

No, it was the lost language of an ancient civilization that was created a long time ago.

In a rhythmic manner...

“The life of one in darkness.

The night of the dark moon.

The night curtain.

The pitch black wings.

The illusion of darkness.

The king of shadows.

Wherever he was, in the world, in the distance, he was always surrounded by darkness, covered in the endless universe—”

“You are...”

However, Ryner didn’t stop talking as he stared at Froaude,

“That was the legend of the shadow king who covered the world. There were also rumors that he was actually human...as he carried out cruel violence in the world, he was viewed as a demon lord...but this king gave a ring with mysterious ability to his most capable subordinate, which was...”

“SHUT UP!”

Froaude's roar didn't make Ryner quiet down,

"The ability to manipulate shadows. After that, the subordinate used that power to kill off important people in opposing countries one by one, and the Dark Emperor's land expanded. However...when that subordinate was about to kill an important person from a certain country, a knight who was protecting that person sliced off the finger with the ring and stole it, and the Dark Emperor was finally killed by the power of the shadows...the story goes like that, I guess? However, it's still a mystery how the Dark Emperor had such a mysterious ring and where the ring came from. The manuscript never left these details...but the name of the knight who took that ring became famous as a legendary hero who saved the world, and he's definitely called..."

Ryner paused and looked up at the sky, looking like he was trying to search through his memories,

"He's definitely called, yes, Halford Miran.

And then, your name is Miran Froaude...doesn't that sound similar?"

"..."

"Are you a descendant of that Holy Knight Miran...?"

"...Even if I am, what do you intend to do? The situation hasn't changed one bit, right? You will die here. There will be no other ending."

But Ryner coldly retorted,

"Don't be so self-obsessed, descendant of the Legendary Hero. When you say that you're going to kill off all the kids, aren't you wrecking their dreams?"

"I'll kill them before their dreams are destroyed."

Froaude reached out his hand that was wearing the ring.

However—

"...You can't do that."

Ryner said.

"Isn't it proven? Halford Miran sliced off the finger of the assassin who manipulated shadows and withstood the power of the ring."

“But you’re not Halford Miran. You can’t do that.”

Ryner nodded,

“Ahh...I definitely can’t do it. But, if it’s her... Ferris, she definitely can. If it’s her, she can move at a speed faster than Halford's.”

“How stupid...you believe in such a thing? That swordswoman was personally killed by me.”

But he, Ryner, lifted his head,

“Idiot. Don’t say such awkward things like trust and stuff. I’m just used to being beaten up by her. It’s more of a personal experience or something like that, I guess? And...see for yourself.”

After saying that, Ryner stared behind Froaude,

Ferris was still fighting.

She completely ignored the wound on her back as she sliced off the limbs of the demon with her godspeed blade, and continued to slice the limbs up into bits before they returned to the body...

She was just like a tornado.

A sharp tornado that would rip anything that touched her into bits.

Her movements were faster than ever before, and Ryner had never seen her being so fast when she was fighting against him...

However, her movements were still speeding up...

It was an unbelievable scene.

Froaude was gobsmacked.

No, even if it wasn’t Froaude, anyone who saw it would call her,

A monster.

One with tremendous strength, one that anyone would fear, curse, detest, stay away from.

However...Ryner just grinned happily as he watched what was going on.

“Okay. Now then, Froaude, I’m sorry, but I’m going to pull up the curtain. I haven’t slept at all during this time, and I’m really tired...”

After he said that, he started moving his hands quickly and created a magic array,

“What I seek is thunder >> Izuchi.”

And immediately, he shot a lightning strike at Froaude.

Of course, Froaude easily defended against it...

But this was just to hold him down. Ryner was just diverting Froaude’s stare at him,

“Ferris!!”

He shouted. Ferris turned that emotionless stare over here in a response-like manner..

She immediately dashed here...no, it could only be described as instantaneously...

She swung out her fist,

“I say...heh!? No way!? Wha—...GYAAAAHHH!!?”

Ryner got hit by the fist on the head.

The figure that stepped on Ryner, who collapsed on the ground, flattened him,

“Too slow, Ryner. I nearly died there. Alright, hurry up and tell me the weakness of that shadow monster.”

“No, if this keeps up...I’ll definitely die faster than you would...”

In this situation, even the most pressing of things didn’t matter,

“Now’s not the time to say such things! But when you said I was too slow...did you know that I would see through his weakness?”

“Nn. I felt that you would definitely realize it, which was why I held off the demon myself.”

“In other words...”

And Ryner inadvertently looked up at Ferris, who nodded her head,

“Yes, because you’re an evil person who uses the weaknesses of women to blackmail them. I think you should be able to do so this time...”

“I knew that it would be like this in the end...”

And so one and so forth...

As for whether the term called trust existed between these two people, let’s not look into it for now...

Ryner’s face showed a smile as he lifted his head to stare at Froaude,

“Alright, what are you going to do? You should have seen the movements of this person here just now, right? If it’s her, once she knows what her target is, your finger with the ring can be sliced off that easily. Also, it’s 2 vs 1 now. I’ll return those words you said just now right back at you...I don’t think you have a chance of winning, do you?”

Ferris then continued,

“Hou. So that ring can create shadows? What is that thing, Ryner?”

“U~n, that seems to be a Hero's Relic that we’ve been looking for...no, I think it’s more accurate to say that it’s a demon’s legacy. Anyway, it’s something like that.”

“I see...then, why are you prone in such a place? There’s a hero’s relic in front of us, you know? Hurry up and take it back. Get moving!”

“What!? Weren’t you the one who took me down!? I’ll kill...”

But Ryner’s words were interrupted as Ferris’ sword was placed right in front of him,

“Oh, sorry, my hand slipped. Then? What were you saying?”

“.....No, I’ll stand up now. Sorry...”

Ryner got up slowly.

As he watched the two of them, Froaude...

“Fu...fufu...kukuku...I see. You two are really interesting. It would really be a pity to kill you...”

Ryner stared at him,

“Didn’t I say that you can’t kill us?”

Froaude simply nodded,

“Maybe. But I will have to kill you one day. You two are too dangerous. If I let the two of you live, you will become an obstacle to my master, a powerful obstacle even Toale Nelphi won’t be able to match...”

Ferris looked intrigued as she said,

“Who’s the one controlling you from behind? A noble from Nelpha...I guess not? What are you scheming?”

But Froaude merely showed a smile and leapt backwards, away from where he was.

He stared at the sky that was starting to show the light of dawn,

“It’s a pity, but I can’t tell you at this point. Looks like I still lack ability in dealing with you two...I’ll retreat for now this time.

Ahh, but don’t worry. I won’t take action on Toale-sama. That’s because I have the huge issue of having to kill you two...then, that will be all for today... but we will meet in the near future.”

The moment he said that, the darkness under Froaude’s feet expanded quickly and surrounded him, devouring him within...

His body disappeared.

However, Ryner didn’t have any intention of chasing after him.

Ryner showed a tired expression,

“I really don’t want to see him again.”

He said. Once he checked that Froaude’s presence had disappeared completely, he sighed.

He stared at the spot where Froaude disappeared from...

“Really. We got a troublesome opponent targeting us...”

He groaned.

The next time, he would prepare himself with enough power to win...even though we managed to force him to retreat...

The next time...

Ryner turned to Ferris, and said,

“But if that move just now wasn’t effective...it would be bad...is it unbearable?”

Ferris’ breathing started to be erratic as if she was a completely different person from before, and her face was flushed, “Ahh.”

She leaned her body on Ryner’s chest.

Ryner shouldered her weight and frowned.

The blood that was flowing out from the wound on her back had already drenched her clothes...

It was a wound that was on a fatal level.

As the blood continued to flow out, her body heat was sapped away, and her body was abnormally cold.

She tried so hard not to let Froaude realize how serious her wound was. Ryner stared at Ferris and realized this.

Ferris, who often showed a poker face, was showing a slight anguished expression on her face...



Ryner carried Ferris' body gently,

"...You've worked hard. Leave the rest to me, take a nap for now."

"...Nn. Don't you dare attack me when I'm asleep..."

"OF COURSE I WON'T!!"

Ferris lifted her head for a moment and stared at Ryner's face,

".....Nn."

She closed her eyes in Ryner's arms.

Part 3

The next morning...

Even though it can be said as that, it was already morning, so it should be an hour later instead...

They hid their presence and tried their best not to let out any sounds as they moved.

The enemies were powerful. They would not be shocked by any half-hearted methods, and they were always sleepy.

But failure was not an option. Their mission was important.

They had never failed before, and from today on, they would not allow for any failure.

This fact brought about a huge burden in their heart...or rather, eased their hearts. Their concentration heightened as part of this profession. They opened the door to the room, exchanged looks with each other, formed formations and moved forward.

Their target was the one sleeping on the bed.

To them, it was a job they were already used to, and they would not hold back. The key was to move things cautiously and smartly.

And then...they reached their target.

They stared at each other, waiting for the time to strike.

The careful plan was drawn up last night. They had already decided on the positioning and the roles of each person.

It was simple, and there were no problems.

The leader closed his eyes, counted 3 seconds, and slowly opened his eyes.

With this signal, they pinched the target's nose and mouth...

“.....!? U...a...aauuu...I say...”

Ryner's face was twisted as he got up from the bed with force and roared,

“HOW MANY TIMES MUST I SAY THAT YOU BETTER WATCH OUT BEFORE I'LL REALLY KILL YOU!!?”

“KYAAHHH!! THE BEAST WOKE UP—!”

“WHO'S THE BEAST—~”

“Eh—but Iris-chan...”

“I HEARD THAT A LONG TIME AGO!!!”

“KYAH KYAH!!!”

The kids jumped around happily, messing up the research materials Ryner worked so hard to arrange.

Ryner showed a look of mortal despair,

“.....Seriously? ...Not talking about it here, but I pretty much didn't get any sleep at all last night...ahh, if I let Froaude kill them all here...”

He clutched his head. However, the kids didn't care about Ryner as they said excitedly,

“Alright! Now for Ferris nee-chan!!’

Just when they were about to rush out of the room, Ryner frantically grabbed the collars of all the kids in a skilful manner, “Ahh, hold on. Well...she's not feeling too well, so don't call her up. Also...”

At this moment, his face showed a heinous smile,

“Now that you guys actually bothered my sleep, do you think I'll let you off without doing anything?”

“Wh, wha...what are you trying to do?”

“Fuufuufuufu.”

Ryner laughed in an eerie fashion...

“DIIIEEE!!!”

He wanted to let the kids suffer a hell of tickling...

But after that...

“GYYYAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!”

Only Ryner’s cry could be heard as the kids counterattacked...

Part 4

After doing such a stupid thing, Ryner was dragged downstairs by the kids and into the dining room where Toale prepared breakfast.

Over there, Sion and Iris were again sitting from who knew when as they ate breakfast...

“Yo, Ryner.”

“.....I say, why are you here again...really carefree...speaking of which, is that thing done?”

He said as he sat down. In a substitute-like manner, Iris,

“Thank you for the treat!! Hey hey, lookie look, Iris finished up all the food cleanly, you know! Iris is not picky at all, you know? Amazing, right? Amazing, right?”

Sion nodded in agreement,

“Un. Iris is amazing, isn’t that right, Ryner?”

“Naa? What amazing? Why must you always bring up such trivial stuff...
GGYYYYYAAAAAAHHHHH!!!”

And Iris beat down Ryner viciously,

“Iris will go and play then!”

With lots of momentum, she ran out to the outside where Toale’s brothers were.

And right in front of Ryner, who collapsed on the floor,

“Are you alright, Ryner-san?”

Toale asked in a concerned manner as he prepared Ryner’s breakfast...

Like usual, Ryner weakly raised a hand,

“Do, don’t mind...ah, but it looks delicious today. Sorry to let you treat us every day.”

“Don’t be so formal. Did you sleep well last night?”

These words caused Ryner to immediately think of the long night yesterday...

“.....Ahh, I did sleep.”

He said in a rather tired voice.

However, the oblivious Toale showed an innocent grin,

“That’s good then. There’s still a lot more, so please eat up as much as you want.”

Having said that, he returned to the kitchen again.

Ryner then turned his head around and looked at Sion, who was sitting down and giving an evil grin that was completely different from Toale...

Ryner sighed,

“You...don’t just eat the rice and pay Toale properly.”

“I don’t want to be told this by you when you’re just freeloading off them just because you saved them from thugs.”

“Shut up, it doesn’t matter since I worked hard to protect Toale’s life.”

“Heh? What does that mean?”

Ryner pondered for a while and wanted to say what happened last night...but he didn’t know where to begin as he pondered...

The fact was that the guy wanted to attack Toale. I don’t know whether it’s a real one, but the guy had a mysterious ring that was like a hero’s relic. Ferris was also injured by him. Even after explaining all of this...they didn’t get that ring in the end...so how could I just say such a troublesome thing in a happy manner...I’m so sleepy.

Having thought about such a complicated thing in an efficient manner, Ryner bore a sleepy expression as he said,

“No, just something personal. Then, what about you? What’s your intent in

coming here?”

At this moment, Sion chuckled,

“Nope, I just came here today to give a report. It seemed that you guys were really active last night. My subordinates told me that it seemed that the nobles of Nelpha were planning to assassinate me...Gustaph...or something like that? I think they requested this famous assassination group that had this name... really, I didn’t notice that they arrived. Did you take them down?”

Ryner showed an annoyed look as he said,

“Really...everything was so troublesome...thanks to all these things, I didn’t manage to sleep well recently, you know? Also, there was an unbelievable monster...”

“Nn? Monster?”

“Something personal.”

Sion showed a surprised look, and Ryner forcefully diverted the topic,

“Then? What happened in the end? Was everything all right?”

Sion nodded,

“Ahh, Nelpha owes me a huge favor this time. For the time being, the king of this country can’t lift his head in front of me. However, it seemed that the spies from Roland don’t know...I can’t say that it’s a perfect score for me...but it’s a pass.”

Ryner heard that explanation,

“Really? That’s good then.”

He spoke in a completely lethargic voice, and on seeing that, Sion smiled in a satisfied manner,

“Yeah, that’s good. Since you’re so useful, I’ll give you more work...”

“AHH!? HO, HOLD ON A MOMENT! IS...ISN’T THAT DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU AGREED ON! I JUST NEED TO FIND THE HEROES’ RELICS...”

Sion played dumb as he gave a blank expression,

“Really? What are you saying? However, it’s your choice whether you want to listen to me or not, but the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad would definitely get in the way of your sleep.”

That, on hearing the term sleep...

“Uu...”

Ryner, who didn’t get any proper sleep recently, admitted defeat completely...

The dejected Ryner stared at Sion who was grinning proudly over his victory. *I have no idea which part of my life has gone wrong here...* and while Ryner was extremely bothered, Sion looked around, “But what happened to Ferris? I didn’t see her today for some reason...”

“Ah, that person’s sleeping now. She’s not feeling well.”

Sion widened his eyes and showed a sincerely astonished look,

“Heh? She...she’s not feeling well? That person? No way...don’t tell me she got injured fighting the assassins...that is impossible...for her.”

“Nope.”

Ryner simply nodded, and Sion sank into deep thought again,

“Ah, then, is it that thing? That thing every month?”

Ryner shook his head,

“That kind of thing can beat her? I think she’s someone who’ll say something like ‘Nn. No problems.’ with no expression on her face even with her arm sliced off.”

“Ahaha, that’s like her, that’s like her. It’s really possible that she would say that. Then, what happened? Did she hurt her stomach eating too much dango? Or...lovesickness? Don’t tell me you did something to Ferris?”

A pale-faced Ryner stared at Sion who said such a thing that even God would be horrified by...

“DO...DO YOU SERIOUSLY WANT TO KILL ME!!? IF I DO SOMETHING TO FERRIS, IT’LL BE WEIRD IF MY HEAD DOESN’T SPLIT FROM MY BODY IN LESS

THAN ONE SECOND...”

“Not bad. It’s a man’s romance to bet his life on a woman. Do you best, Ryner.”

“SHUT UP!! GO DO IT IF YOU WANT!!”

“Nope, I’m the kind of person who prefers to live long and prosper.”

“Ah? What about the romance?”

“Where there’s life, there’s hope.”

“...That’s true...that’s a reasonable saying. Anything’s great as long as I don’t die, right? FINE, I’VE DECIDED! I’M NOT GOING TO DO DANGEROUS THINGS AGAIN! EAT, SLEEP, EAT, SLEEP!! AHH, I’M SUCH A GREAT PERSON!”

“.....I think your thinking here is atrociously wrong, Ryner.”

As the duo continued their stupid conversation...

It was completely impossible to think that one of them was the king of Roland who was called a wise king, and the other was a hero who single-handedly defeated every one of Estabul’s magic knights and stopped the war...

At this moment,

Something was standing behind the two men, silently and without presence.

“Nn. I see. I was wondering what my male colleagues were secretly talking about. So the men’s romance you two are so concerned about is such a noble thing. I’ll grant you a wish then.”

Suddenly, a sound could be heard from behind Ryner.

KIIN! Then, the sound of a sword being unsheathed could be heard...

Ryner and Sion...

“.....GGGGGYYYYYYYYYAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!!!!!!”

The worst cries of anguish in the past few days rang through Toale’s house...

**Prologue II Still, they head towards a future
full of worries**

Part 1

He took on a lot of things alone.

The delight of others, the sadness of others...

Love, hatred. Life, death.

“ ... ”

Once he made a wrong move in his decisions, a lot of people would die or live; be sad or happy.

He had to make a decision. He had to kill the left side to save the right. He had to kill the right to save the left.

The choices were always forced on him.

Now, decide for yourself which life is more important?”

Which side's life is less important?

Every decision he made would cause people who caused tragedy to die...

But he continued to endure everything.

And then, he was able to calmly take them on.

It was ironic, but he had an expression rather similar to hers when he saw her go while he was still young.

Even though it was very hard, very sad; very painful, and yet calm as if there was no pain...

Part 2

Sion was in his office, reading the reports of all sorts of things that happened in the visit to Nelpha. First, it was the report of Count Buble and Calne about what the nobles did when Sion wasn't in Roland.

Then, there was a report about Froaude's activity log in Nelpha.

And finally, a detailed history report of Claugh's secret investigation on Miran Froaude when Sion wasn't around...

However, these were meaningless. No matter how much he investigated, there were no results of information during the time before Miran Froaude was taken by Count Froaude's as a foster son...

So, everyone who knew about Froaude were all...

It would be more accurate to say that they were killed...

The numbers were unbelievably staggering.

For example, during the time when Froaude was at the orphanage, everyone from the caretakers to the students...

Were all killed...

There was no way to explain why.

And—

Someone knocked on the door...

"I'm Miran Froaude, delivering an additional report regarding the visit of Nelpha."

It was a voice that was always so respectful, yet one with emotions restrained...or eliminated.

"Come in."

Sion commanded, and Froaude walked in.

Sion continued to read the details on Froaude.

The report stated that Froaude's origin of birth was unknown, and there were no records of his real name. And then, at the end of the report, Claugh concluded with 'Miran Froaude is exceptionally dangerous and should be dismissed immediately'.

After reading it, Sion lifted his head, and Froaude was holding the document and standing right in front of him.

He stared at Sion with icy cold eyes and smiled lightly.

"So, what do you think of my past?"

"..."

How did you know of such a thing? Sion didn't say these words out.

This man was just like that, and Sion showed an indifferent expression,

"Nn. Does it make you feel uneasy that your past was being investigated on?"

"No, that's to be expected. You're the king of this country, so all the people around you have to be chosen rigorously."

"Ahh, that's right."

As he said that, Sion handed over the report Claugh wrote about Froaude right at him,

"Read the last line."

Froaude received it...

"Haha, 'exceptionally dangerous and should be dismissed immediately'...is it?"

He read on in an interested manner.

"Then? What do you intend to do?"

Sion shrugged,

"You did a good job at Nelpha. Why must I dismiss you?"

It was a direct answer. Froaude's expression seemed to show his piquing interest.

"You're really a weird person."

"I don't want you saying that about me."

"...If it were me, I would have definitely dealt with such dangerous talent."

In response to Froaude's words,

"Really? But I intend to use you. My principle is to make use of whatever I can make use of."

Normally speaking, if a superior said such a thing to a subordinate, there would be no loyalty or anything like that left. However, Sion said that without restraint, and in response, "That's right, which is why I can't become king. Your tolerance is much greater than mine. As long as you need me, I'll continue to serve you."

Froaude said.

Looking rather satisfied...

This was a devilish smile that nobody wished to see.

Right now, Sion could only continue to progress on.

No matter what kind of demon it was, he would give it his own flesh and blood if they need it.

If that's the way to build a world without wars, madness and where everyone could smile,

In order to fulfill the promise he made with her in the distant past.

No matter what that price was...

And—

Sion didn't answer Froaude's question,

“Then, what about the additional report on Nelpha?”

Froaude nodded and handed over a document. The other person browsed through it.

What was written was...

About how Toale Nelphi would become an obstacle to the Roland Empire, and about Froaude attacking Toale’s house.

However, he met an unexpected obstacle, and though he gave the opponent a hard time, he had to concede a failure in the end.

Immediately, Sion remembered.

At that time, Ryner said something vague.

And about how Ferris didn’t appear as she wasn’t feeling well.

No, even though she sent him and Ryner flying for saying bad things about her...

They actually took on Froaude head on.

That was...

Even though it was indirect...wouldn’t that mean that Sion had to kill Ryner’s group in the end...

Thinking about this...

He could only shake his head and reveal a bitter smile, thinking that it was all just a coincidence. *From now on, I must tell Froaude to inform me of whatever he wants to do before he does them.*

He convinced himself and let Froaude fall back.

“ ... ”

He released his hands and slumped onto the chair, delving deep into his thoughts.

He could offer anyway to fulfill the promise he made with her in the distant past.

No matter what that price was—

His friends' lives...

The moment these words appeared in his mind, Sion's face writhed.

He managed to pass the crisis this time.

But what about the future?

If the right side is Ryner's group and the left side is the country...

Which will I choose?

I will...

Pondering, he shook his head,

"...How stupid."

I won't let things end up in such a state. I'm not so stupid.

No problems.

But no matter how many times he repeated this to himself, Sion's expression continued to look grim.

At this moment, the door was knocked on again.

"Nn?"

Sion looked at the door.

"This is Major Rahel Miller of the 'Taboo Breaker' Pursuit Squad. I'll like to discuss with Your Majesty regarding the posting of my direct subordinate Lieutenant Milk Callaud..."

Immediately.

Sion's expression eased up from just now.

And grinned like a mischievous kid...

After that, he showed a stern look again.

"Come in."

And gave orders to Miller.

Part 3

Several days later,

There was a heavy atmosphere in a room in a simple building that was completely different from the glamorous palace.

Milk Callaud kept still there...

(Uu...why is the Major's expression so stern...)

Miller was staring at her with a stern expression right in front of her large round eyes.

Miller was in his early thirties, but his sculpture like face, refined moves and usual stern expression made him feel alot older than he really was.

There were quite a few female officers who felt that Miller had the charisma of a mature man, and he was rather popular...but to Milk, who was only 16 years old and had no experience of love or any knowledge of a man's charm, this feeling was alien to her.

(Auu...he's definitely angry...why is that? I definitely brushed my teeth after eating, and I don't randomly eat stuff at night...ahh, but the cake I ate the last time was really nice. The Callaud family wouldn't let me eat their sweets to keep me in shape, so it was the first time I ate cake. Ehehe, everyone was really nice to me ever since I came to the dorm of the 'Taboo Breaker' Pursuit Squad. Everyone calls me a princess who doesn't know anything, an immature lieutenant, but they're all very kind to me ♥) Milk was the only one who got happy alone.

On a side note, she had no idea of the extent as to how much she missed the point...

No, that wasn't it. She was even flailing her hands as she thought. She would be absolutely delighted no matter how minor that happy thing was. The

members of the 'Taboo Breaker' Pursuit Squad's first impression on her was that she got close to everyone in a cheery manner— 16 years old, born a noble, one of the rare females in the army, and promoted to lieutenant in a way that was unheard of.

However, this envy immediately vaporized as she had now become someone completely beloved.

This was what Milk was outstanding at. Her straightforward demeanour and leadership abilities of a certain extent allowed the squads she directed to fulfil their abilities beyond their limits...

Well, such a thing may not have anything to do with Milk's conscious efforts...

But speaking of which, what Milk was pondering about...

She was thinking about the taste of the cake, and while she was intoxicated in delight a while ago, she was now troubled as she went mm—, (Wait!? Is that cake the reason why the Major's angry? Au...tha, that's right. To a soldier, the body is the essence...of course he'll be angry since I ate the cake...) She looked really troubled as she hugged her head.

Seeing this, Miller sighed long and hard in a tired manner as well,

"I didn't call you out for any other reasons."

"Ye, yes."

Milk answered in a tense manner.

"Um. I called you over to assign you your next mission."

Milk showed a surprised look,

"Eh? Mission...is it? Not about the cake?"

"Nn? Cake? What are you talking about?"

"Heh?...ahh.....erm...not exactly...ah,ahaha. It's nothing. I didn't eat the cake at all, really!"

She waved her hands nervously as she said this.

"???"

Miller stared at her in a bewildered manner, and again gave a deep sigh,

“Then, can I continue with what I want to say?”

Milk nodded, and he continued with his words,

“I feel that this order is too early for you, but this is an order from the higher-ups. You’re assigned to pursue the dangerous ‘Taboo Breakers’ who destroyed the Roland sentry gate.”

And then, Milk showed a serious expression.

“Pursuing ‘Taboo Breakers’ will mean...ki,killing them, right...? Or capturing them?”

“Nn. I’ll leave that to you. Watch the opponents. If they can be captured, capture them. if they can’t be captured, eliminate them.”

Eliminate.

Miller was very direct in his words.

It was this kind of place here, a place where they had to pursue their old comrades, capture them or kill them.

That’s why they were hated and belittled.

“ ...”

Milk closed her eyes sadly, but Miller was still cold in his attitude.

“Any other questions?”

Milk tentatively asked,

“Then...do you know of the history of those ‘Taboo Breakers’?”

However...

“So what if you know?”

“Eh...no, erm...”

Miller watched Milk try to explain herself as he sighed softly in a way she couldn’t detect, and then used a tender expression that was slightly different from before to stare at her, “Lieutenant Callaud, the people who escaped the Roland Empire definitely have their reasons to leave. There’s nothing

meaningless in this world.”

“Ye, yes...”

Milk was surprised by Miller’s sudden words and nodded,

Miller continued,

“But if the secrets of Roland’s magic were revealed to others, it would mean that the Roland Empire’s weakness is revealed to the other countries. That would mean that there’s an opening for the other countries to invade, and a chance for a war to start. If that happens, a lot of people will die...do you understand? The tragedies of war, a large number of people dying meaninglessly; I...don’t want to see that again.”

“I understand.”

Milk answered. Miller nodded.

“Let me ask you again. Why do you want to know about the history of the ‘Taboo Breakers’? What if they’re worth pitying? Will you pity them and not kill them?”

“We, well...”

“Our mission is as such, a dirty job that people don’t want to do. However, it’s a job someone has to do. Alright, let me give you a choice here.”

“A choice...is it?”

Miller drew out two set of documents from his drawer and handed them over to Milk,

And then,

“The left has documents that basically include the points about this mission. If you accept this, the mission will start. But on the right...is a department transfer document. What I mean is that you have to question your own thoughts before you take the next mission. Alright, what will you choose? The choice you make will be your own life. Nobody will laugh at you for this. The deadline is tomorrow, so think this through properly...”

But before Miller could even finish, Milk grabbed the documents on the left

without hesitation.

Without any pondering or struggling at all.

Miller stared at Milk.

“This is your last chance. Is this choice really good? It’s a dirty job where you kill all your past friends, different from the outstanding path like the method you used to enter the famed Callaud family, you know? Is this really good? It’s better for you to consider this through...”

But Milk smiled without any trouble burdening her,

“There’s no need to think any more, I’ve decided. Thank you for your understanding, major, but...it’s fine. That’s because I died once, and came back from the dead!”

“.....What?”

Miller couldn’t help but ask Milk who said such vague words. Milk showed a reminiscent look on her face and grinned in a rather happy manner.

“I died once before. Uun, when I was bought by the Callaud family, I felt that my heart was dead. However...that boy allowed me to live. He told me not to die. So I lived. That’s why I want to repay that boy...at that time, due to the war, there were deaths all around me.....

He...may have...died...

But, But if he’s alive, he’s definitely in Roland. That’s why I want to protect this Roland he’s in now.

I want to protect this Roland where I met him.

I want to protect this Roland where you all were protecting without me knowing, Major Miller.

I want to protect this Roland where everyone’s smiling, depressed, yet working hard to live in.

As long as there are no wars, and that everyone can be relieved of their sadness, it’s alright for me to be a little hurt. That’s why I’ll carry out my mission as part of the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad with dignity!”

Miller stared at Milk, and Milk suddenly panicked,

“.....Erm, ah, why did I say such things that are over my head...au, so, sorry. Well, erm, no, it’s not that amazing. I just like the people here, and the cake’s nice too...so...ah, not good, that didn’t count. I, I didn’t eat the cake!”

Miller’s stern eyes stared at the thoroughly confused Milk...

And then, he said with a loud voice, one that people would feel he was angry,

“LIEUTENANT CALLAUD!”

“Eh? Ah, yes!”

Milk was suddenly roared at as she immediately stopped her little actions.

Miller said to Milk with a stern voice,

“Welcome to the ‘Taboo Breaker’ Pursuit Squad. I’m looking forward to your performance in the future.”

Milk then answered with a serious expression,

“Yes, I’ll work hard and not fail your expectations!”

“You may be dismissed. Time to start preparing for your mission.”

“Yes.”

After saying that, Milk left the room.

Part 4

Several seconds after Milk left the room,

Miller scratched his head,

“Oi. Luke, Lach, Lear, Moe, come in. Lieutenant Callaud’s gone.”

And then, another door leading to another room that was different from the one Milk left by was opened, and four men walked in, One of them, the tall white-haired Luke who was about 25 years old, was weeping,

“Uu...the kid is such a good kid, Miller-sempai.”

Two of the rest, the boyish Lach and Moe were teary-eyed as well, as their tears flowed right down their faces,

“I’m so touched...”

“Me too.”

And then, the last one with a cool look on his face, Lear handed a handkerchief over to Luke,

“It’s true that the girl just now is a rare one worth praising.”

“Ahh, there are no kids we mustn’t protect!”

On saying that, the four of them nodded away, un un. Miller gave an annoyed look,

“You guys, let me say this first, she’s your superior here, you know?”

Luke nodded,

“I understand that, sempai. It’s alright. We’ll definitely not allow that kid to become bad. I’ll bear responsibility. What ya say?”

“Yes, sempai!”

They said that as they left the room. Those just now were the men in Milk’s

squad.

As he watched them leave...

“Didn’t I say that she’s the superior...are those guys mistaken somewhere?”

Miller clutched his head and sighed for the umpteenth time today.

Even though nobody knows what the future holds, Milk Callaud’s long journey began...

Part 5

However, in that distant place in Nelpha, Ryner's group didn't know of what was going on in Roland at all...

He continued to show that unenthusiastic expression as he continued with his research.

“Ahh~ so sleepy, so annoying...I say, I beg of you, just let me sleep a li...”

Immediately, Ferris readied her sword at Ryner's neck,

“Nope. We can’t just stay around here. Another guy like the one the last time may also be aiming for the legends’ relics. Hurry up and finish your research so that we can hurry up and leave.”

“I say, even if you say that...this can’t be forced out, you know? If I panic, I’ll miss something, and the interpretation will be wrong...”

“Nn, then read it quickly, easily and accurately.”

“I say...how do you expect me to do that...au...I got it, I’ll do it, I’ll do it, okay!? Just sheath your sword!!”

It was the usual scene.

The next day, Ryner, who had been going at his research without sleep was finally at his limit as he fell asleep the moment he took the book...

“IRIS-CHAN’S PUUUNNNNNCCCCCHHHHH!!!”

“GGGYYYYYYYYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

Anyway...Ferris and Iris took turns watching Ryner, and he couldn't sleep for 4 days while he continued his research. Even if the sword didn't slice his head off, he felt that he was finally on the brink of dying due to a severe lack of sleep...

"Is it over!? I DID IT!! I DID IT!!!!!"

Ryner shouted with teary eyes as he looked really touched, and sprawled down as he wanted to sleep. But at this moment, Ferris, “Un, Iris, tell Sion that we’re leaving.”

“Un! Bye bye, nee-sama! Beast!”

After saying that, she leapt out from the window on the third floor, and then,

“Wait...oi, you, did you just say that we’re leaving now? Are you joking there?”

Ferris simply said directly,

“Nn. Your face is really more like a joke here. Let’s go.”

“.....Are you...the devil? I’ll definitely die if I move now...please...”

Ryner’s words were interrupted as Ferris drew her sword—

But Ryner decided not to back down.

“I’m going to explode. I won’t move even one step unless I get sleep.”

“Nn. If you really want to sleep, I can let you sleep forever...”

“DON’T DO THAT!!! ARGH, I DON’T CARE ANYMORE!! I’M GOING TO SEND YOU FLYING!!”

“Bring it.”

And then, Ryner and Ferris—why does it seem that such a scene happened before as well—glared at each other...

Part 6

Several seconds later,

Ryner was a lot weaker and battered before as he hid inside Toale's courtyard. Beside him, Ferris was hidden as well as they watched Toale play with the kids in the courtyard.

Ryner said,

"I say, Ferris. Do you think that guy will really become the king of this country? Like what that shadow monster manipulating man said?"

But Ferris didn't add on,

"I don't know. That'll depend on Toale himself."

"I say, wouldn't the topic end here just like this?"

"Nn? What now? Are you trying to talk to me?"

Ryner seemed like he deliberately wanted to talk about this,

"...No...more than this, I really don't feel like talking. I want to sleep...but I know you won't let me anyway. I just feel that becoming a king will be very troublesome, and it's better not to be one. Just look at Sion. He took on too many things...forcing himself into a tight spot...he doesn't actually look happy like this, right?"

"...That's true. However, whether that guy becomes king or not can't be decided by himself. The times will always aspire for a king."

"I say, why are you saying such cool words...is it like that?"

"Um, that's how it is."

Ferris nodded. Ryner's eyes showed a little sadness as he narrowed them and watched Toale play along with his brothers happily, "This is really...getting

troublesome here...”

At this moment, Ferris stood up.”

“Alright, we should leave.”

She started to walk away. Ryner turned back to look at her.

“Oi Ferris. Do you really intend to walk off without greeting Toale? He took care of us for such a long time...”

But Ferris didn’t look back,

“It’s because he took care of us for so long that I find it awkward to say goodbye to him. I don’t want to pay because of such a debt of kindness.”

Ryner showed a tired smile on his face as he stared at Ferris who said such cruel words. He got up and chased after her.

“Is that really the reason? The real reason why you’re so anxious to leave is because that guy called Froaude might come back if we continue to stay here, right? That guy’s aiming for us now...Toale will definitely tell us to stay if we tell him we’re going to leave, so we secretly snuck out, isn’t it?”

But Ferris simply shook her head,

“Nope, I’m just trying to experiment and see how long you can last without sleep...”

“OI!”

“Just kidding.”

“Liar! You were looking very serious just now!”

“Nn. How did you know?”

“Then don’t just admit it!”

Though such a conversation continued, Ryner stopped his words,

“But that can do.”

He continued on in a tired manner,

It seemed that Ferris wanted to say something as well...

She remained silent for a short while as if she was thinking...

Suddenly,

“...Ryner.”

“Nn?”

“The wound on my back has recovered to an extent where there’re no problems. It could have healed faster for me without that messy treatment of yours...”

Ferris said with her usual monotonous voice, yet Ryner’s eyes widened...

“Are, are you actually thinking of thanking me...?”

“...Why must I thank you no matter what?”

And she coldly answered,

Then,

“I say, you...”

He uttered these words...

But Ryner felt that there was a slight change in Ferris’ expression...

“...”

Ryner smiled.

“Is that so. That’s good then.”

“Nn.”

Ferris looked away for some reason, and Ryner lifted his head to look at the sky.

There were no clouds in the sky...

It did feel better than when they left. He was sleep-deprived, and his mind was a little messy...but he should be able to hang on for a day.

Ryner stretched his back,

“Then, where should we go now?”

He said as he expanded the large map of Nelpha in his mind...

Afterword

So what does it mean by 'The Destined Three-Legged Race'?

Continuing off from the first volume, Ryner, Ferris, Sion and several named characters who debuted in this volume will end up involved in a complicated age of civil strife and warring countries...

However, I have no idea what kind of genre this work would be...(Laughs)

Ah, but speaking of the afterword, the book in this work would only be completed about 1 month after this...

Then, as I return to read the work that was continued, fm fm. For an overall positive story, there's an unexpected number of sad episodes happening to people (what did I do to the rest?) But these are just stupid thoughts from me. U—so far in life, Ryner made a report in the first volume, had to go through who knows how much hardship and sadness, and whenever it was important, he didn't have the power to protect the people who were very important to him. Whenever he tried to do so, he ended up being all frustrated and gritting his teeth because he knew that he ended up hurting the people important to him...such as parents or lovers.

In fact, I can't endure as much hardship as I would like...

Why then, when I write my own works, think back to my own life experiences, and earnestly reflect on the past, do I feel shocked by them whenever I revisit them?

Ryner's laziness, Ferris' cruel means (laughs)

Long story aside—thank you.

'Densetsu no Yuusha no Densetsu 1 The Ambition In a Kingdom of Afternoon Naps'

The one in charge and two others were ‘scared...’, and after quite the shaky time, things got a lot smoother...

Really, it’s largely thanks to everyone’s support! I always say, no matter what book it is, every one of them exist according to what the reader wants...this is definitely not something in my power...supervisor-san, illustrator Toyota-san, everyone in the editing department, the others who were also involved...with all your continual efforts, this book was born.

Everyone, thank you very much!

After this struggle, let’s continue to work on this work together!

The subtle words I want to say end here...

This is too short for me to continue on (laughs).

By the way, there is another series I’m writing called ‘Warrior-Officer El-Win’. (I’ll use this chance to promote this series here, as the 5th volume was released last month. It’s good if you’re happy with this.) And—here’s the talk of a conspiracy by someone (laughs)

When the first volume was released and sold, the copies quickly disappeared from the bookstores, and I only got cola! I went around searching in anger, but what do you think this time?

According to what I heard, there would often be a reprint, and I think the author and supervisor will be fearful of having to sell a large amount of unsold reprints, I guess...?

Eh? I can’t afford it? So, I’ll have to give up 800 yen to a friend...?

800 yen.....what the!? What an expensive friend...

Auu...I’m sorry. So it’s worth 800 yen. I’ll write something else more interesting, so please forgive me...

And so my resolve was hardened.

Ah...erm...well...I’m not very good at afterwords.

Then, to say it in a blunt and unfair way after, when the fifth volume of

‘Warrior-Officer El-Win’ was released last month, I spent about two straight months working on the afterword~

There’s nothing to write about! (KABOOM!)

This is not the lousy kind of example I need...

Ah! What to write about!? Please let your wife hear it out.(Who?)

Last year, I went to the Fujimi Thanksgiving party. I went to the party with Toyota-san who drew the very charming illustrations of DenYuuDen...just the two of us, <I suppose we’re the youngest here in Fujimi here? If that’s the case, let’s work hard together as friends and aim for the best!> And that’s what I talked about (By the way, the title of the youngest author was taken by Izumi Yuuki-san who debuted last month) And, that’s how it is. Such a young youth called Kagami is paired with the brave multi-talented go-getter girl supervisor M-san (Supervisor: ...Ah~, I’ll just write whatever I want...). The ability of the go-getter had explicitly reached the ears of the writers of Dragon Magazine.

<It’s the thanksgiving party at the end of the year, and this is the first time I’m seeing Miss Illustrator and the other artists...> I instinctively ran to the stairs to use my phone the moment I read that,

“Oii!? Who’s this supervisor-san!?”

“Fufufu...it’s an eradication of relationships between ladies and men! You’re talking to the Christmas Eradication Committee!”

“How do you expect me to join such a thing!? No, joking aside, where did you read such a huge misunderstanding of a marriage theory? Have you heard of a couple saying such a theory!?”

“Eh~, then, do you follow some articles I wrote?”

“Naturally!”

“Then, you really won’t work with Miss T? I thought any good woman will do...”

“Hold on a mommeeeeeeeeeennntttt!!!! Why do you say that...”

“That was quite a good laugh out of you~ I’ll write a manuscript out faster if you don’t want to~”

“Yah...why so despicable!? Sion? Are you Sion!?”

Thus, the monthly slave, Kagami Takaya is finished here, right...?

(Note: Incidentally, most of these were written based on facts.)

And a few days later, Toyota-san,

“I—can’t—get—married—anymore—”

And a written mail appeared in my accursed mail.

Go-getter supervisor M-san is terrifying fast...

All said and then, supervisor-san was wonderfully friendly, there were a lot more books published this year than last year, and I think that 4 volumes were published this way...maybe I can allow this weirdness...

“Ah—speaking of Autumn reading, Autumn~Kagami-kun”

Ha!? I hear a terrible voice again!? Autumn!? What autumn?

“Warrior-Officer El-Win volume 6 is confirmed to be sold in Autumn!

Uwah!? They said so!? It’s decided!? Decided!?”

“It’s decided. Furthermore, in winter...”

Kyaa~ I don’t want to hear anymore~...

And, because of such a thing now, I’ll probably end up dying by then~

Kagami Takaya

Translator's Notes and References

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